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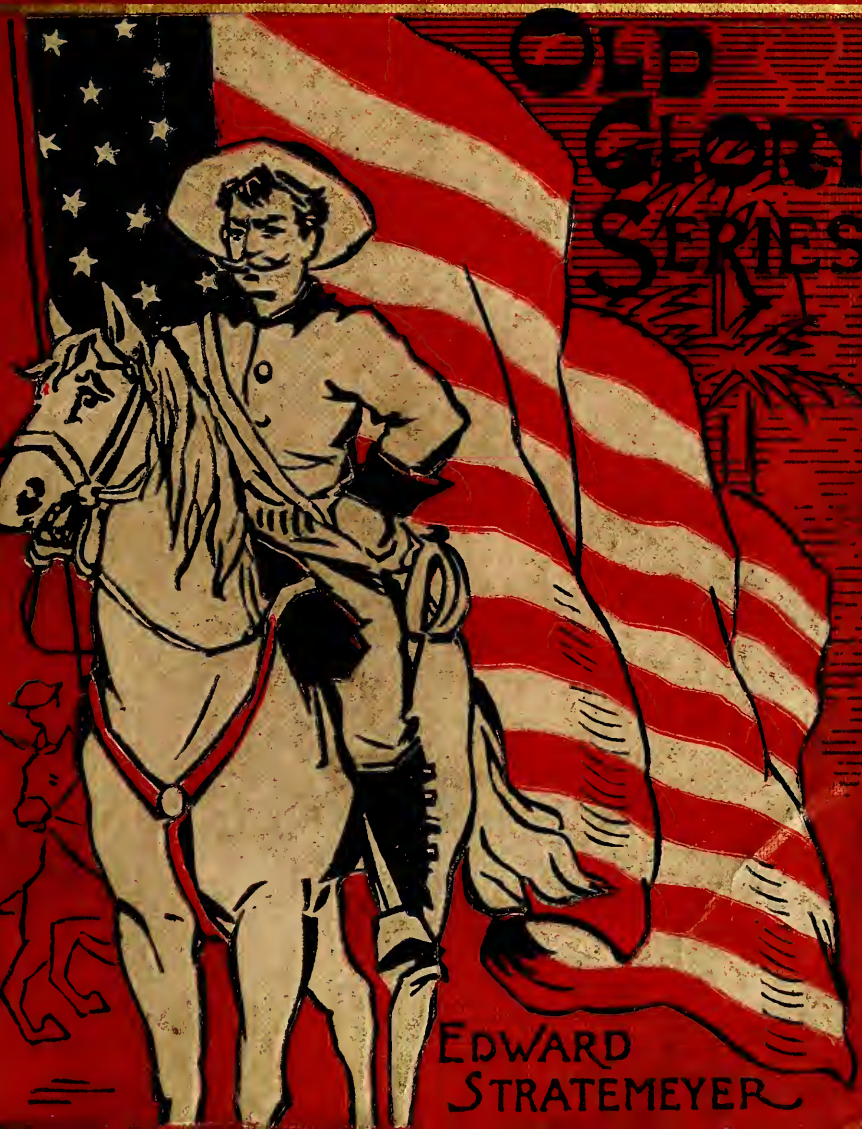

EDWARD STRATEMEYER

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Old Glory Series

UNDER OTIS IN THE PHILIPPINES

OR

A Young Officer in the Tropics

5/4/06
RCM

EDWARD STRATEMEYER

AUTHOR OF "UNDER DEWEY AT MANILA" "A YOUNG VOLUNTEER IN CUBA" "FIGHTING IN CUBAN WATERS" "RICHARD DARE'S VENTURE" "OLIVER BRIGHT'S SEARCH" "TO ALASKA FOR GOLD" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

A. B. SHUTE

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UNDER OTIS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

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PREFACE

"Under Otis in the Philippines" is a complete story in itself, but forms the fourth volume of the "Old Glory Series," tales of life and adventure in our army and navy of to-day.

All these stories relate, primarily, the haps and mishaps that befall the three Russell brothers, Larry, Ben, and Walter. In the first volume we followed the fortunes of Larry while "Under Dewey at Manila"; in the second we marched with Ben as "A Young Volunteer in Cuba"; and in the third we witnessed what Walter could do while "Fighting in Cuban Waters."

In the present tale the scene is shifted back to Manila Bay and the island of Luzon. Larry has returned to his old place on board Admiral Dewey's flagship, *Olympia*, and Ben has reënlisted, and become a second lieutenant of volunteers in our army of occupation. For the sailor boy there is little to do, but the soldier boy is kept busy, first in helping to defend the intrenchments about the

city, and then in participating in the capture of Caloocan, Malabon, Polo, and the rebel capital, Malolos, as well as in aiding to quell the great riot which broke out when the Tondo district of Manila was burnt to the ground,—a fire entailing a loss, according to General Otis's estimate, of half a million dollars, not to mention the many lives that were sacrificed.

In the penning of this tale the writer has aimed to be as accurate, historically, as possible, and for this purpose many reports have been examined,—reports not only of those high in authority, but also the accounts sent in by private parties who were in good positions to witness what was occurring. Many of the incidents of camp life are such as have come from the lips of the returning volunteers themselves.

When the Series was begun it was hoped that it would find a cordial reception among both critics and the public in general. That hope has been more than fulfilled, and the author now trusts that the present volume will be as well received as those which have gone before.

EDWARD STRATEMEYER.

NEWARK, N.J.,
August 1, 1899.

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UNDER OTIS IN THE PHILIPPINES

CHAPTER I

THE SAILING OF THE TRANSPORT

"We are off at last! Hurrah for Manila and Uncle Sam's soldier boys!"

"Yes, off at last, Ben, and I am not sorry. Life on land doesn't suit me any more."

"That is because you are getting to be a regular sea-dog, Larry. I suppose you are fairly aching to be on board the *Olympia* once more with Luke Striker and your other old friends."

"I'm aching to get back to the flagship to do my duty as one of Uncle Sam's jackies, Ben,—just as you are to get back to the ranks of the army. Both of us have been idle long enough, with such stirring times going on in the Philippines. I wish we had been there when the city of Manila surrendered."

"So do I. But a fellow can't be everywhere. I wasn't mustered out of the Cuban service until after that time. See, we are making a turn past the wharf, and there are Walter and Uncle Job. Good-by, Walter, good-by!" And Ben Russell raised his voice to its full extent, while his younger brother Larry joined in with equal heartiness. "Good-by, Uncle Job!"

"Good-by, boys!" came back faintly, and a waving of handkerchiefs followed. "Good luck to you, and may you come back covered with glory!"

The cries and hurrahs were taken up on all sides, for the noble steamship, but recently pressed into service as a United States transport, was loaded down with troops, infantry, and artillery, and all along shore there was a jam of people who had come to see them off on their long trip from Brooklyn to Manila, thousands of miles away. In the midst of the uproar the military band belonging to one of the regiments of volunteers struck up the familiar air, "Auld Lang Syne," and scores of voices took up the words of the song.

"This makes me feel as I did when the 71st left Tampa for Cuba," remarked Ben. "Only at that

time I was among friends, and now I am among strangers."

"Gracious, Ben, you are not going to call me a stranger, are you?" queried some one at his elbow. "Perhaps your shoulder straps have elevated you above the old crowd."

"Gilbert Pennington!" was the joyful rejoinder, and a warm handshake followed. "And in uniform! What does this mean?"

"It means that I couldn't stay behind," was the answer. "When I heard that you and Captain Roberts and Stummer and the others had reënlisted, I threw up that new position and went down to the recruiting-office, and here I am, first sergeant of Company B of our regiment, while you are second lieutenant of Company D."

"Are any of the old crowd with you?"

"Four, all told, — but there are at least fifty of the Rough Riders in the Philippine service already, so I'll feel more or less at home when I arrive in Manila. I suppose this is your brother Larry who sent those long letters to you while you were in Cuba."

"Yes, I am Larry," came from the young tar. "And you are Ben's old chum. We'll have to be

chums too, after this — at least, until we land in the Philippines. Then I suppose we'll have to separate, — and each fight in his own way for all he knows how!" And with a laugh on both sides the pair shook hands.

The Russell boys were three in number,— Ben being the oldest, Walter next, and light-hearted Larry the youngest. In the former volumes of this series, entitled respectively, "Under Dewey at Manila," "A Young Volunteer in Cuba," and "Fighting in Cuban Waters," I told how the youths had been left, at the death of their mother, to the care of their uncle, Job Dowling, a miserly man who cared for little but to make money and save it. Although the boys had a fine inheritance coming to them, the treatment they received was so outrageous that they all ran away from home, Larry being taken against his will on a freight car to Oakland, California, just across the bay from San Francisco; Ben working his way to New York; and Walter drifting to Boston.

At San Francisco Larry shipped for a trip on the Pacific Ocean, and after numerous adventures was cast away with a friend of his, Luke Striker, and picked up by the Asiatic Squadron, under Com-

modore (afterwards Admiral) Dewey, just in time to participate in the stirring battle of Manila Bay.

At this time the war fever was at its height, and, thrown out of the position he had obtained because of a fire, Ben enlisted in the 71st Regiment of New York, went to Cuba with our army of invasion, and fought nobly throughout the campaign leading to the surrender of Santiago. During the never-to-be-forgotten battle of San Juan Hill, the young volunteer did a great service for a certain Major Starwell of the Regulars, and for this he was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant, a rank which was still allowed to him upon reënlisting for service in the far East.

At Boston, Walter Russell had enlisted in the navy and been assigned to the *Brooklyn*, Commodore Schley's flagship. How the Spanish fleet in Cuban waters was destroyed, and what part the stanch *Brooklyn* took in the contest, are now matters of history. That Walter was not backward in doing his whole duty during these lively times my old readers already know.

The running away of the three youths had angered Job Dowling greatly, and he had started

out from his home in Buffalo to "bring 'em back and teach 'em the lesson they needed." Larry was out of his reach, so his first move was after Ben, who, as he managed to learn, was in New York. On this trip to the metropolis the old man took with him some heirlooms belonging to the Russell family, intending to sell them if he could get a fair price. He knew that the valuables ought not to be sold, they having been left to his wards as keepsakes, but to his narrow mind to treasure the articles was sheer foolishness, "when the money from 'em might be in the bank a-drawin' four or five per cent interest along with the rest o' their fortune," as he argued.

But for once Job Dowling had overreached himself. Instead of selling the heirlooms they were stolen from him, and this getting to Ben's ears, ward and guardian had a warm, wordy quarrel, in which Job Dowling came out second best. So afraid of being prosecuted was the old man that he consented without a murmur to Ben's enlisting in the army and, later on, he also allowed Walter to join the navy. The recovery of the heirlooms by a professional detective was a long and expensive task, and when he received them Job

Dowling was a wiser if not a sadder man. "I reckon as how I don't know it all," he murmured to himself. "Perhaps I had better let them boys take care on themselves for awhile." And this he did, with excellent results. When the war with Spain was over, and all the boys came home on a brief visit, it was found that the guardian had actually turned over a new leaf, and the reunion, about which each had been so doubtful, turned out to be a most happy one.

As Walter was home only on shore leave it was not long before he had to return to his ship. The time of Larry and Ben, however, was now their own, and they remained around Buffalo for several months, Larry spending most of the days on Lake Erie, a sheet of water with which he was thoroughly familiar. In the meantime each watched the newspapers eagerly for news from the Philippines, and when it became almost certain that there would be fighting between the United States troops and the insurgents under General Aguinaldo, Larry immediately announced his intention of rejoining Admiral Dewey's squadron, while Ben lost no time in reënlisting as previously mentioned. In Ben's company were Carl

Stummer, a German, and Dan Casey, a young Irishman, both of whom had served with the young volunteer in Cuba. Gilbert Pennington was a young Southerner who had worked with Ben in New York, and who at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War had joined Roosevelt's Rough Riders. Their adventures together in Cuba had made them almost brothers.

Many of the transports carrying troops to the Philippines had sailed by way of the Pacific Ocean, but the one to carry Ben and Larry was to sail by way of the Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea, Suez Canal, Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, so the youths had quite a novel trip before them. It was decided that Job Dowling should come to New York to see them off, and Walter sent word that he would also try to get another leave and be on hand to wish them luck.

Two days before the departure from home came news which was as dismaying as it was unexpected. A small bank, known as the Hearthstone Savings Institution, had failed, and the cashier, Braxton Bogg, was missing. A speedy investigation of accounts revealed the fact that the bank's funds were one hundred and forty thousand dollars

short, and what had become of the money and the cashier nobody could tell.

Of the inheritance coming to the three Russell boys more than three-quarters had been invested in this bank by Job Dowling, "because they promised sech high interest," as he explained. All the former miser's cash had been put in the same place, so that he was left almost penniless so far as ready money was concerned, and was compelled to place a mortgage on his house in order to make both ends meet. This, as my readers can well imagine, nearly broke his heart.

"We're out three-quarters of our fortune, that's sure," had been Ben's sober comment. "I wish I could lay hands on that Braxton Bogg. I know him, and I'd make him square up, or know the reason why." Little did he dream, however, under what strange conditions he and the absconding cashier were to meet.

CHAPTER II

GETTING INTO TROUBLE

BEN and Larry had arrived on the transport but a short while before sailing, so the big ship was a stranger to them. Yet, eager as they were to inspect the various quarters, they remained on the upper deck until New York harbor was left behind and the Statue of Liberty became a mere speck in the distance. As an officer, Ben was allowed to move about in many places which were prohibited to the ordinary soldiers, and he took his brother and his chum Gilbert with him.

"I reckon it will be some time before we see the States again," remarked Gilbert. "Perhaps we'll never see them again — if we are shot down," he added reflectively.

"Oh, don't grow too serious," returned Ben. "Remember, we came out of the Cuban campaign without severe injury, and there we had the trained

soldiers of Spain to fight against. In the Philippines the half-civilized natives —"

"Will put up as good a fight as any of the Spaniards did," finished the young Southerner. "Don't deceive yourself into believing that because the Filipinos are not Americans or Europeans that they don't know how to shoot."

"To be sure they know how to shoot — they have proved that in their battles with the Spaniards," said Larry. "There are hot times ahead — unless we grant Aguinaldo and his followers their independence — but no matter how hot the times, I'm certain we'll come out on top."

"I don't see how we can grant the Filipinos their independence just now, Larry," answered his brother. "They have no actual form of government, since Spain has stepped down and out, and it would be foolish to let General Aguinaldo set up a dictatorship. The only thing to do is to let them come under the protection of our country and then give them their liberty when they are educated up to the point of caring for themselves."

"But the Filipinos are educated; that is, those who live in such cities as Manila and Ilo Ilo are. I know that from what I heard aboard the

Olympia and in Hong Kong. Some of the officers said they thought the Filipinos were more capable of governing themselves than the Cubans are."

"Well, it may be true — I have never met any of them. But I don't believe in letting Aguinaldo have his own way."

"Oh, no! neither do I, for I am sure he will ride right over the ignorant people of the interior of Luzon, and of the smaller islands. We have got to take hold somehow, but just how must be settled by a wiser head than mine," and Larry smiled broadly. Then he added slyly: "I'm no politician, I'm only one of Uncle Sam's jack tars."

"And I am only one of his soldier boys," added Ben. "We had better leave these big questions of statesmanship alone and do our duty as we find it. Phew! but I'm getting cold!" and the young lieutenant gave a shiver as a strong blast of wind sent his cape coat flying about his ears. "Perhaps we had better go below."

"Come on by all means," came from Gilbert. "This November air cuts my Southern skin like a razor. I'm glad we are bound for the tropics. I can stand the heat a good deal better than the cold."

"Perhaps you won't think so when you strike Manila Bay," was Larry's comment. "You may have had it hot in Cuba, but just wait until you see what we'll treat you to out there. Why, one day the thermometer got so high it broke the top of the gla—"

"Stow it, Larry; none of your sailors' yarns so early on the trip," interrupted his brother. "Come on and see if our extra baggage is safe," and he followed Gilbert to the lower, or berth, deck.

The transport had once belonged to one of the Atlantic lines of coastwise steamers. She was of seven thousand tons' burden and her general fittings were first class in every particular. But below the upper deck what had once been a luxurious cabin and after cabin had been completely torn away and in their places were long lines of iron rods, — "gaspipes," the soldiers termed them, — to which were attached beds made of oblong bits of canvas hauled taut at the top and bottom and sides. The rods ran from floor to ceiling, and the beds were placed one above another, three and four high, and in long rows with narrow gangways between. At one end was an open space, where the troops occupying these quarters could lounge

around and take their meals. Tables there were none, the space being too limited to admit of them.

"We haven't the finest quarters in the world," remarked Gilbert, as he sought out a quiet corner and sat down. "But we are better off than that battery in the steerage." He turned to Larry. "Where are you to bunk?"

"I don't know yet. With the rest of the men for the navy, I presume. I understand that there are about forty jackies on board, along with a certain Quartermaster Yarrow, who is to take us in charge. Here is our baggage, Ben, so we are safe on that score."

"And here is my bunk," replied Ben, as he pointed to one at the head of a row. "I am sorry you cannot remain with me, Larry. As there is nothing else to do, let us find out where you are to be placed. If you have to go into the steerage —"

Ben broke off short, as a burly naval officer loomed up behind him and his brother. The next instant the newcomer had Larry by the shoulder and was shoving him roughly toward the cabin stairs.

"You get to your quarters, and be quick about it," came in harsh tones. "If I catch you down here again, I'll put you in the brig."

"What do you mean — " began Larry, indignantly, and then, as he saw that the newcomer was a quartermaster in the navy, he broke off short. "Is this Quartermaster Yarrow?" he questioned.

"Yes, I'm the quartermaster, and I want you to get out of here and stay in your own quarters. The soldiers won't want you nosing around here."

"Excuse me, but I brought my brother down here," put in Ben, and saluted, at which the burly one did the same, but with very bad grace. "We just came aboard, and he doesn't know where he belongs."

"I'll show him mighty quick, then, lieutenant. These jackies I have here are worse than a lot of bulls in a ten-acre lot — running everywhere. They think that on a transport they can do as they please. But they can't — and I'll soon prove it to 'em!" And Quartermaster Yarrow pursed up his lips tightly. He was one of that class of seafaring men who believe in bullying upon all occasions.

Larry listened to the words, and his face flushed hotly. On board the *Olympia* he had been treated

with uniform fairness, and the present experience was, consequently, new to him.

"I'm sure I haven't been doing any harm down here, quartermaster," he said, as calmly as he could.

"We wanted him," put in Gilbert. "He's more than welcome to stay."

"Never mind if he is welcome," was the surly response. "He goes to his quarters, and at once." And the overbearing petty officer gave Larry another shove in the direction of the stairs.

Before he had stopped to think twice, Ben had caught Yarrow by the arm. "See here, you treat my brother decently!" he ejaculated. "Don't think because you are in temporary command that you must play the part of a brute."

"What! do you dare to interfere with me?" burst from the naval quartermaster. "Why, I'll — I'll — "

"I'm not interfering with you, sir. I simply ask you to treat my brother fairly. It is my fault, not his, that he is down here."

"And my fault, too," added Gilbert. "If you think there has been any wrong done, quartermaster, you had better report us to our colonel."

The latter was said so dryly that the petty

naval officer felt certain that Gilbert was poking fun at him, and his face grew more sour than ever. "Get along with you!" he cried to Larry, and followed the youth to the stairs. "I'll get even with you some other time!" he continued, glancing back at Ben and Gilbert.

The incident had been watched by fully a score of soldiers standing around. "Sure an' he has the swelled head, so he has!" murmured Dan Casey. "Take that fer luck!" And without being noticed by any one he threw the remainder of a half-sucked orange at the retreating form.

The bit of fruit caught the quartermaster in the back of the neck; and as he leaned forward in mounting the steps, it slipped several inches below the collar line, inside. Clapping his hand to the spot, he dug at the fruit, and at last succeeded in drawing it forth, but not before what juice it had contained had been squeezed out of it.

"How's that fer a shot, b'ys?" called Casey. And then he suddenly stopped short, and lost no time in shifting his position in the crowd.

"Who threw that at me?" demanded the naval officer, in a rage. "Did you do it?" he continued, striding up to Ben.

"I did not."

"Then it was you," went on Yarrow, turning to Gilbert.

"No." And Gilbert shook his head slowly, but with a smile on his round face which irritated the petty officer more than ever.

"I say it was you!" howled Yarrow. "You needn't tell falsehoods just because you are too cowardly to own up."

Scarcely had the words left his lips when Gilbert leaped to his feet, his hot Southern blood boiling within him. "You'll take that back!" he cried, in a suppressed voice. "I'm not to be insulted by the like of such a bully as you."

"I'll take nothing back. You threw that, and you are too much of a sneak to own up. If you — oh!"

Quartermaster Yarrow's tirade came to a sudden termination as Gilbert leaped upon him. There was one swift, telling blow, and the petty naval officer measured his length at the foot of the cabin stairs.

"Good for Sergeant Pennington!" came from one of the soldiers standing by.

"Give him another wan, sergeant," put in

Dan Casey. "He needs to be taken down a peg."

"Dot fellow vos too fresh alretty," spoke up Carl Stummer. "Maype ve drow him oferpoard in der salt vater, hey? Dot's der vay to cure him."

At this last sally a laugh went up, in the midst of which Quartermaster Yarrow arose, his face as red as a beet. He started to rush at Gilbert, but Ben and several others stepped in between.

"There must be no fighting here!" It was the voice of Captain Larchmore, of Ben's company. The captain had just come up from the opposite end of the birth deck. "The first man to strike a blow goes to the lock-up."

"He knocked me down," fumed Yarrow.

"And he insulted me," put in Gilbert. "I'll not take an insult from anybody."

"He has no right here, has he, captain?" came from one of the soldiers. "I thought this deck was for our boys only."

"I came down for one of my jackies," growled Quartermaster Yarrow. "There he is at the top of the stairs," pointing to Larry. He looked at Captain Larchmore and then at the angry crowd

around him. "You soldiers think you are going to run the whole boat, but you are not. Just wait until I've seen to my men, and then you'll hear from me again." And with a savage shake of his hand at Gilbert and Ben he ran up the cabin stairs, pushing Larry before him, and disappeared.

CHAPTER III

AN UNREASONABLE QUARTERMASTER

"I'm afraid we've made a mess of it," remarked Ben, when the excitement was over and the passing of a large ocean steamer had drawn most of the soldiers away from the scene of the encounter.

"I reckon I've made a mess of it," returned Gilbert, gloomily. "But I couldn't stand an insult from such a bully, especially after he had acted so unfairly toward your brother. I wonder what he'll do — report me?"

"It's more than likely, Gilbert; and if he does, I'm afraid you'll be good for two or three days in the brig — or else lose half a month's pay."

"Well, if he makes a charge, I'll make a countercharge — that's certain. I hope what passed here won't affect your brother. It's a pity he's got to obey the orders of such a brute."

"Larry won't stand much — he's too quick tempered," returned Ben. "But I must attend to

duty now," he concluded, as he noticed Captain Larchmore beckoning to him; and the two friends separated.

In the meantime Larry had reached his place among the other jackies on the transport. He found them a whole-souled, jolly crowd, quite in contrast to the petty officer who commanded them. Before, however, he could introduce himself, Quartermaster Yarrow called him to one side and checked off his name in a book he carried for that purpose.

"That second lieutenant of Company D was your brother?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Who was the other fellow?"

"Sergeant Pennington, of Company B."

"He shall suffer for the way he has treated me."

At this Larry was going to make some hasty reply regarding the quartermaster's position in the unfortunate affair, but checked himself.

"His assault upon me was entirely uncalled for," went on the petty officer.

"Perhaps he didn't like the manner in which you spoke to him," suggested the young tar, meekly. For the sake of his brother's chum he was resolved

to smooth matters over if such a thing could be accomplished.

"He threw that half-rotten orange at me."

"Excuse me, quartermaster, but I think you are mistaken. I saw the piece of fruit come sailing over his shoulder."

"Of course you'll stick up for him, Russell,— it's natural you should. But I know he threw it. I shall make it warm for him. As for yourself, get to your place over in that corner yonder and don't let me hear of your leaving it for the rest of the day," and with this command, Quartermaster Yarrow stalked off, in as bad a humor as ever.

"Oh, he's a piece of work," was the comment of one of the old tars, Jack Biddle by name, after Larry had related the particulars of what had occurred. "And the worst of it is that he's no fighter at all — never was in a battle to my knowledge."

"Doesn't he belong to Dewey's squadron?" asked the youth, in astonishment.

"He does now — to one of the new war-vessels — one of the craft we took from Spain. But he used to serve on one of the Pacific coast vessels, and then he

came over to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He's half landlubber, he is!" And Jack Biddle tossed up his wrinkled and sunburned face in disgust. Biddle himself had seen service in the navy for twenty odd years and had been aboard the *Texas* during the memorable fight with Cervera's fleet off Santiago Bay.

"I don't want a row with anybody," went on Larry; "I guess we'll get fighting enough when we reach Manila."

"No such fighting as we had at Santiago, lad, or as Dewey had against Montojo. The insurgents haven't the ships."

"That may be true. But what if some foreign power steps in to help the rebels?"

"They won't dare — not after seeing how we treated Spain. But I suppose we'll have lots of work along shore, shelling some towns and the like," concluded Jack Biddle.

As it was a raw day, it was no hardship for Larry to stay below, and he spent the remainder of the afternoon in stowing away his baggage and in becoming better acquainted with those who were to be his companions on the long voyage to the China Sea. Of the crowd, six were bound for the *Olympia*,

and as soon as these found he had served on that cruiser, they lost no time in plying him with questions regarding the vessel and what they might expect on going aboard.

"I missed the Santiago fight," said one, in deep disgust. "I was on the *New York*, Rear-Admiral Sampson's flagship, and the day Cervera came out to fight, our vessel sailed up the coast so that the admiral might confer with General Shafter of the army. I'd a give three months' pay to have been in the mix-up." And the tar sighed deeply.

"Yes, it was too bad the *New York* was not on the scene after Sampson had done so much to make the blockading of Cervera successful," answered Larry. "But such are the fortunes of war. I hope if we have a fight in the Philippines, you get in it," he added with a smile.

Quartermaster Yarrow had gone on deck, and he did not reappear until the last mess for the day had been served out and the transport was rolling heavily in the swells of the Atlantic Ocean, many miles eastward from Sandy Hook. The youth wondered if a charge had been made against Gilbert, but did not deem it prudent to ask any questions.

The supper was a good one, for the transport had

taken on a large stock of fresh meats and vegetables at Brooklyn. "You want to eat all you can," was Jack Biddle's comment. "It won't be long before they begin to serve us salt horse."

"I wonder if we'll not make some stops along the route?" said Larry. "They could stop at a number of places along the Mediterranean or Red Sea if they wanted to."

"You mean if the foreign powers would let us stop," put in Mark Olney, a jackie of Larry's age. "Some of them are mighty jealous of letting some other power land on their territory."

"Spain won't let us land, you can rest assured of that," replied Larry. "She would rather sink the transport in the middle of the Mediterranean."

As all hands were seated on either ditty boxes or the deck, the meal had very much the appearance of a party at a picnic, and it was no easy matter to dispose of the food without spilling a portion. Yet, in spite of the inconvenience, the best of good spirits prevailed.

"Here comes the quartermaster now," whispered Mark Olney, presently. "Hello, what's the matter with him?"

"What's the matter with him?" burst out Jack

Biddle. "He's seasick, that's what's the matter. Told you he was a landlubber," he added, with increased disgust.

The old sailor was right. Quartermaster Yarrow was feeling the effects of the ship's rollings. He was deadly pale, and his face twitched constantly in a most suspicious manner. Suddenly he clapped his handkerchief to his mouth and ran with all speed for the upper deck.

"He has gone to feed the fishes!" cried Mark Olney. "I can't understand what they wanted to put him in charge of this crowd for." The quartermaster did not reappear until most of the sailors had retired for the night, and then he crept into his private apartment much crestfallen and without a word to any one.

The transport had left the United States on the Saturday following Thanksgiving Day, and it was expected that with a fairly prosperous voyage Manila Bay would be reached late in January or by the first week in February, making a trip of two months or thereabouts, — a long time to those who were impatient to get to the scene of active operations. All told, the ship carried 1645 souls, the majority of whom belonged to the regiment of soldiers

and the artillery already mentioned. There were likewise a signal corps, a hospital corps, and over a score of women, — officers' wives and Red Cross nurses.

If the quartermaster was sick, the tossing and pitching of the transport did not disturb Larry, and after a sound sleep he arose at five o'clock, made his toilet, and proceeded to the upper deck. He had scarcely appeared when Ben joined him.

"I thought you would be up," was the elder brother's greeting. "How did you make out after we parted?"

Larry told him. "The quartermaster is still out of sight," he continued. "I don't know what he will say when he appears. Did he make a charge against Gilbert?"

"No. He started to, but the whole thing fell to pieces. He declared up and down that Gilbert had hit him with the orange and the colonel was going to put the sergeant under arrest, when Dan Casey spoke up and said he was the guilty one. Then Yarrow got mad, and finally the colonel said he had better drop the matter, and the bully went off as mad as a hornet —"

"And got seasick," finished Larry, laughing.

"It served him right. I hope the lesson does him good."

"The trouble is, some men never learn a lesson, Larry. See how hard it was for us to get Uncle Job to do what was fair and square."

"But he came around all right at last, Ben,—that is, in a general way. I don't think he had any right to put more than half of our money in that bursted Hearthstone Savings Institution. He was too greedy for interest."

"That is true; but still he wanted the interest for us, not for himself. We must give him credit for that. As miserly as he has been, I would rather trust Uncle Job than such a bully as Quartermaster Yarrow."

"Oh, so would I. But, Ben, if Uncle Job isn't careful, he will lose every cent of what is coming to us."

"I gave him a good talking to before we parted, and I guess he will be careful enough after this. I only hope the authorities catch that missing cashier and get back what he has taken."

"More than likely the money has been squandered in speculation. If that is so, arresting him won't do us or any of the depositors much good. But

I had better be getting to my quarters again, or Quartermaster Yarrow will be up in arms as he was before," and Larry walked away, leaving Ben to rejoin the soldiers of his company.

The conversation had taken place close to the upper cabin, where a slight turn hid the rest of the deck from view. As Larry and Ben disappeared there was a stir in a near-by corner, and Quartermaster Yarrow arose from a reclining chair in which he had been trying to take it easy, after finding it unbearable in his apartment below, because of a dizziness in the head.

"Calls me a bully, eh?" he muttered. "Wouldn't trust me?" He pulled savagely at his sandy mustache. "All right, my lad, I'll remember you, and you'll have good cause to remember me, too, before we get to Manila! I never yet had any use for fellows in the navy who had money coming to them. They are always too high-strung for their own good. A taking down is just what they need,—and this one will get it sure!"

CHAPTER IV

SOMETHING ABOUT THE FALL OF MANILA

NEARLY seven months had elapsed since Commodore Dewey had sailed into Manila Bay with his warships and utterly destroyed the Spanish fleet lying off Cavité. During that time our army and navy had been equally victorious in and around Cuba and Porto Rico, and the war with Spain had been brought to a speedy termination.

Affairs in the Philippines had been, and still were, in a most unsettled state, and when Larry and Ben rejoined the twin branches of Uncle Sam's service it looked as if a long and bitter contest with the insurgents in the island of Luzon, the largest of the Philippines, was inevitable. That the outlook did not belie itself, coming events speedily proved.

Commodore Dewey had had an ample supply of warships with which to meet and defeat Admiral Montojo, and thus place the important city of

Manila, the Philippine capital, at his mercy. But with a force of less than seventeen hundred men it was absurd to think of taking the city and holding it, much less to think of holding the islands in general. This could only be accomplished by having the army coöperate with the navy, and it was estimated that between twenty thousand and thirty thousand men would be needed for the service.

At the outbreak of the war, hardly a thought had been given to Spain's Eastern possessions, and no one had dreamed that our soldiers would be needed for such distant service, consequently to organize a Philippine army of invasion was no light task. Yet the various states of our Union, especially those of the West, responded nobly, and on the 25th of May, 1898, the first expedition, under the immediate command of General Thomas M. Anderson, sailed from San Francisco, carrying nearly three regiments of infantry and a detachment of artillery. A second expedition soon followed, commanded by Brigadier-General F. V. Greene, — Ben's old commander of the 71st, — and then came several other expeditions, including one carrying Major-General Wesley Merritt, who had

been put in command of this Department of the Pacific, as it was termed. This expedition also carried the Astor Battery, a New York volunteer organization, equipped by the millionnaire whose name it bore.

On arriving off Manila the army of invasion found all quiet, but in a state of suppressed excitement. Admiral Dewey's ships rode the harbor unmolested, the Spanish officials not daring to attack him for fear he would shell the city and destroy it. The enemy had abandoned the fort and other buildings at Cavité, eight miles below the city, and these were in possession of the American marines. Lying in a semicircle on the land side of Manila lay the army of the Filipino rebels, a straggling, disorganized body of men, numbering from ten thousand to fifteen thousand, who had been waging a sort of guerilla warfare against their Spanish masters for several years. The majority were armed with old-fashioned rifles, but there were others from the interior called Igorrotes who carried nothing but spears and war-clubs. These latter natives were very ignorant, and willing to do anything that their educated and wily leaders wanted of them.

The situation at this time was a particularly delicate one. At first the insurgent leaders had professed their willingness to help the Americans all in their power to conquer the Spaniards and drive them out of Manila. But as the days went by and it became evident that the United States intended to obtain control of the islands, they began to protest, and finally set up a government of their own, the Philippine Republic, with General Aguinaldo as their president, and with headquarters at Bacoor. In the forming of this republic it is doubtful if the natives at large had much to say in the matter, the leaders conducting affairs to suit themselves.

On the first day of August, General Merritt found himself in the vicinity of Manila, with an army numbering nearly eleven thousand men. Some had landed at Cavité and other places in the vicinity, and soon all were in a position to threaten Manila on the south and east, having, by diplomacy, induced the insurgents to move northward. This movement brought on a small fight with the Spaniards stationed in the trenches outside of the city, but although a great many shots were fired, little damage was done.

All was now ready for a general attack by our army and navy, and on August 9, General Merritt and Admiral Dewey united in a demand for the surrender of Manila and of all the Spanish troops stationed there. To this the governor-general demurred, asking for permission to consult his home government first. This was refused, and four days later, early in the morning, an attack was begun on the Spanish intrenchments, by the warships in the harbor, and this was followed up by the land forces with such vigor that in a few hours the enemy began to fly flags of truce. The firing then ceased, and before night the city was turned over to General Merritt, and the American flag was hoisted to replace the fallen banner of Castile.

The insurgents had taken but small interest in the battle, but now that it was over they were fairly wild to get into the city, the more ignorant of them believing that all would be turned over to them for looting and plunder. But such an emergency had already been provided for, and the American troops were at once stationed in the trenches formerly occupied by the Spaniards, to keep the would-be invaders out, while a patrol

was established throughout every district of Manila to prevent a local uprising of rebel sympathizers.

The action of the Americans angered the insurgents greatly, and as soon as peace was assured between Spain and the United States, they sent representatives to Washington, asking that the Philippine Republic be recognized, and that our army be withdrawn from the islands. They would undoubtedly have attacked our forces without delay, but saw that they were not properly equipped to do so. Our government was not willing to relinquish the territory taken from Spain, and the most that could be done for the Filipinos was to promise them liberal civil rights if they would submit to our authority — in plain words, to let them run matters to suit themselves, under the guiding hand of Uncle Sam.

But this did not satisfy General Aguinaldo, who, instead of being a president, was really a dictator. He pleaded that his countrymen should be free and independent, that they wanted nothing more and would accept nothing less; and at the same time he sent his aides in secret all over the island of Luzon, and elsewhere, to gather recruits for his

army, which now encircled Manila from the water's edge on the north, eastward and southward to where the Americans still held the ground at Cavité.

This was the situation when Ben reënlisted and Larry determined to rejoin Dewey's squadron. In the meantime the naval and army authorities were not idle, and several additional warships and a number of transports filled with infantry and artillery were hurried to Manila Bay. Under no pretext whatever was Uncle Sam to be caught napping. The Filipinos must be made to recognize United States authority, and if they insisted upon fighting they were to be given their fill of it. Once law and order was restored, all possible benefits of civilization were to be extended to the inhabitants of the archipelago. That they needed the experienced hand of some advanced government in settling their internal affairs there could be no doubt.

When Larry returned to the other jackies he found Jack Biddle and Mark Olney already arrayed for inspection. "We're to have church directly after breakfast," said Biddle. "The soldiers just passed the word along."

"In that case I guess I had better fix up, too," replied the youth, and lost no time in doing so, seeing to it that his "rig" was without a flaw, for he knew that Quartermaster Yarrow would inspect him with special care.

It was still cold, and outside the wind was blowing half a gale. "It's lucky we're not in a sailing craft," remarked Olney. "With such a passenger list we'd founder sure."

"Uncle Sam can't afford to take us to Manila by wind," answered Larry. "To my mind the quicker we get there, the better. I'll wager those rebels won't keep quiet much longer."

Breakfast was soon disposed of, and then soldiers and sailors were lined up for inspection, some on the upper deck and some below. Living quarters were also inspected, and where the least thing was out of order somebody was sure to hear of it, to his discomfort.

When Quartermaster Yarrow came to Larry he eyed the youth sharply from head to feet, trying vainly to find something over which to grumble. But nothing caught his eye, and he passed on, his face drawn down into an ugly scowl.

Bound to make their first Sunday on the ocean

a pleasant one, those on board the transport had arranged a regular programme for the church service, consisting of music by the band, solo and quartette singing, and a sermon, as well as singing by all those who cared to take part. It was the band that called most of the soldiers and sailors together, with its sweet rendering of one of the old familiar church airs.

A song by the quartette followed, and then the chaplain of Ben's regiment stood up and preached a short, but forceful, sermon on temptations and how to resist them. The preacher was a young man, but gifted, and Larry and Ben remembered much of what was said long after the words were spoken.

"Many of you have broken away from home for the first time," concluded the preacher. "Perhaps you feel free from all restraint. But remember that the eye of God is on you wherever you go. He can see not only your actions, but the innermost workings of your heart. And as God can see, to condemn or reward, so can He also help you, if you will but come to Him."

The sermon was followed by a prayer, and then the quartette rendered a song that seems destined

never to die, and which was particularly appropriate upon this occasion: —

"Rocked in the cradle of the deep
I lay me down in peace to sleep;
Secure I rest upon the wave,
For thou, O Lord, hast pow'r to save.
I know thou wilt not slight my call,
For thou dost mark the sparrow's fall!
And calm and peaceful is my sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep!"

"That's grand!" whispered Larry, as the song came to an end; and not only he but also Ben and their friends joined heartily in singing the several hymns which followed. The church service lasted until nearly noon, and was repeated every Sunday during the remainder of the voyage.

CHAPTER V

STRUCK IN THE DARK

"WELL, boys, we've struck winter weather, and no mistake! This wind from the north chills me to the bone!"

It was Gilbert who uttered the words. He was standing on the upper deck of the transport, wrapped up in the warmest clothing his outfit contained, which is not saying a great deal, for the regiment was equipped for a campaign in the tropics, and not for life in the temperate zone.

"I don't suppose your Southern blood ever could stand the cold," answered Ben, with a smile. He felt the chilliness in the air himself.

"It seems to me it's rather early in the year for winter — in this latitude," went on the young Southerner. "Haven't you noticed a great change since last night?"

"I've noticed a change since noon. There has been a big drop in the thermometer. I wonder if

that betokens a storm. I hope not, for a heavy blow wouldn't be pleasant with such a crowd aboard."

"It means that we are in the vicinity of some icebergs," put in one of the transport's officers, who happened to be standing near.

"Icebergs!" came from Ben and Gilbert, simultaneously.

"Yes, icebergs. You know they are frequently encountered on the trip from the United States to Europe."

"I've heard of them. And you think that is what makes it unusually cool?"

"I do. I've encountered icebergs before, and the air was just as it is now;" and the officer turned away to attend to some of his duties.

"I'd like to see some of the bergs," remarked Gilbert. "But I trust we don't get too close to them," he added, with a serious shake of his head.

It was several days after the Sunday just mentioned, and the transport had covered about half of the distance to the Strait of Gibraltar, the gateway to the Mediterranean Sea. Soldiers and sailors had become settled to the routine on board, and everything was working smoothly, excepting that

Quartermaster Yarrow was continually "picking" at Larry, much to the youth's discomfort.

"He's got it in for me, I can see that," said the boy to his brother. "If I give him the least chance, he'll clap me in the brig, or dock me half a month's pay."

"Don't give him any chance, then, Larry. Do your duty always, and he'll be bound to let up sooner or later."

"Nearly all of the men are down on him, Jack Biddle especially. He gave Jack an awful scolding, just because the old fellow let a cup of coffee spill over one of the hammocks during that blow yesterday, when we could hardly keep our feet. Jack says he'll get square, or know the reason why."

"Well, you keep out of the muss, Larry. We all know Yarrow is a bully, — I heard our own colonel say so, — but a fight won't mend matters, and you had better make the best of it until we reach Manila. This trip won't last forever," concluded Ben.

It would not do to let the soldiers grow "rusty" while on their way to the seat of war, and every day after roll-call one or more of the companies were brought on deck and put through a drill lasting the

best part of an hour. The jackies were also lined up for a similar purpose, but their drill was limited, since they were assigned to all parts of the Asiatic Squadron, with duties just as diversified.

The drilling of Ben's company interested Larry very much, and his bosom swelled with pride as he heard his brother, in the capacity of second lieutenant, giving the necessary orders to the men under him. "Ben's all right," he murmured to himself. "He deserves his shoulder-straps. When I get back to the *Olympia* I must see what I can do toward gaining war honors."

Besides the drill there were numerous other exercises, including fencing and firing at a target. Both Ben and Gilbert were good shots, hitting the bull's-eye three times out of five, while Larry did almost as well.

"This trip puts me a little in mind of our voyage from Tampa to Baiquiri," said Ben, after the drilling for the day was over. "Only that didn't last so long."

"Sure and we ain't got thim dudes wid us this trip, lieutenant," broke in Dan Casey. "Don't yez remember phwat trouble they caused all of us, wid their highfaluten airs?"

"Yah, day vouldn't keep sthill until I ordered von glass case for to put dem in," added Carl Stummer. "Of dem dudes vos go to Vanila, Dewey vould fall down mit disgust on seein' dem, hey?"

At this a roar went up. "There yez go wid Vanila ag'in!" cried Casey. "It's meself has told ye it's Manila more than a hundred times. Just remember Manila paper an' Manila cigars, and forgit vanila ice-cream fer once, Carl, me b'y," and another roar went up.

"I presume we'll see some strange sights on the way," remarked Gilbert to Ben. "Even if we don't land anywhere, we'll get a good look at Port Said and Suez when we go through the Suez Canal."

"It's a good thing the canal is there. If it wasn't we should have had to sail around Cape Horn or the southern coast of Africa."

"Oh, I reckon if the canal wasn't there, we should have taken the transport at San Francisco. A voyage around South America or Africa would have taken too long. But it's a good distance as it is. With the annexation of Hawaii and the scooping in of Porto Rico and the twelve hundred islands of the Philippines, Uncle Sam will have a lot of children far and near to look after, eh?"

"Yes, and he will have Cuba to look after, too. Who ever supposed when we turned in to help the starving Cubans that matters would turn as they have?"

"Whenever two nations go to war there is no telling what the outcome will be. If Spain could have looked ahead, I guess she would have given the Cubans their freedom rather than let Uncle Sam take away her other possessions."

"I've no doubt of that. And perhaps we'll be sorry we took the Philippines — if they get us into trouble with some other nation who has a moneyed interest there, Ben."

The mess call for supper interrupted the conversation at this point, and the chums separated, each going to his own company's quarters. It was already dark, and all over the transport the lights were lit. In one of the passageways Ben met Larry, also on his way to mess.

"We're passing some floating ice," announced the young sailor. "Some of the cakes are as large as Saratoga trunks."

"Is that so, Larry? I'll go up after supper and look at them. I heard some thumping awhile ago and wondered what it meant."

"We are a little short of ice, and I've been watching some of the sailors scoop up a few cakes with a big net. It was hard work, and one of the crew came within an inch of going overboard."

"Is the ice like that we already have?" questioned the young lieutenant, with interest.

"It seems to be clearer, and I heard one of the sailors say that the heart of one of the cakes was as hard as flint. I suppose that ice has drifted thousands of miles from its home in the frozen north."

Everybody was cold, and a trip to the big galley fire was considered a luxury. Those who went on deck stayed there only for a short while, and during the mess hot coffee and tea were at a premium.

"I'm glad I haven't a watch on deck to-night," remarked Mark Olney, as the jackies turned in.

"Oh, this is nothing," answered Jack Biddle. "I've been out on trips when half the deck and rigging were covered with ice. We had such a trip when I was serving under Commodore Schley, and we went in search of Lieutenant Greely, who had started out to locate the North Pole and got lost. We found Greely at Cape Sabine, and all hands came pretty near freezing to death."

"Excuse me, I'll do my sailoring under the equator," said Larry. "I'd rather run my chances of roasting to death than freezing. In the China Sea—"

"Silence forward!" came in a rough voice from Quartermaster Yarrow. "Don't you know it's past pipe down long ago? The whole ship ain't going to keep awake just because you want to wag your tongues. Silence, or you'll hear from me!" And after that no more was said, and soon after all hands turned in.

For some reason Larry could not sleep and lay with his eyes wide open, staring fixedly at the bottom of the hammock-cot overhead, in which Jack Biddle was already snoring lustily, having gone to sleep immediately upon lying down. Below him lay Mark Olney, also in the land of dreams.

"I wonder how Luke and the others on board the *Olympia* are getting along?" he mused. "Perhaps they are having the biggest kind of fighting by this time. If they are, it's too bad that I am not in it. But I think that from now on the army will get the lion's share of the work and glory." And then his thoughts drifted elsewhere —to life at home when his mother had been alive,

to his quarrel with his step-uncle and his running away, and then to the thrilling voyage on the *Columbia* and Olan Oleson's villainy. "It's odd that his rascality placed me under Dewey at Manila," he went on. "If it hadn't been for that I might be serving under Captain Ponsberry still. If I ever meet Oleson again though, won't I—"

Larry was permitted to go no further with his meditations. A slight shock somewhere on the side of the transport interrupted him and caused him to sit bolt upright. "What's that?" he cried to another sailor who had roused up.

"Bless me, if I know," was the answer.

"It sounded as if we were struck by something."

"So it did. Perhaps we had better—"

The jackie never finished the sentence, nor did Larry just then pay any more attention to him. Another shock had come, followed by a grinding crash, and suddenly the transport keeled over to starboard, sending the youth sprawling headlong into the gangway. Ere he could arise the heavy form of Jack Biddle came down on top of him, and at the same time all the lights went out, leaving those in that part of the ship in total darkness.

CHAPTER VI

JACK BIDDLE SPEAKS HIS MIND

"An iceberg has struck the ship!"

"We've got a hole in our side and are sinking!"

"Let me out of this! I want to get into one of the small boats!"

"Steady there, men, steady, until we see what the real trouble is."

Such were some of the cries which rang out shrilly on the night air — cries to which but few paid any attention. The shock had come so suddenly, and was so unexpected, that for the moment all was confusion and terror.

"Let me up, Biddle!" gasped Larry, as soon as he could speak, and he tried to shove the old tar to one side.

"Is that you down here, Larry," was the answer, as Biddle scrambled to his feet, with the boy following. "What's up?"

"We're struck — somebody said by an ice-

berg. I guess we had better get to the upper deck."

"Hold on — I'll go with you," came from out of the darkness, and Mark Olney clutched Larry by the arm. "Oh, but this is awful!" whispered the newly enlisted one, hoarsely. "Are we going down, do you think?"

"That depends upon how badly we've been hit," returned Larry. His heart was thumping wildly. What if they should go down? He knew well enough that there were not small boats enough aboard to hold them all.

"Hi! hi!" came in little short of a scream. "Let me get on deck. I can't swim and I don't want to drown! Let me on deck! Oh, why did I ever come on this trip!"

The howl — for it was nothing less — came from Quartermaster Yarrow, who was stumbling along the gangway, stepping on all who happened to be in his path. The petty officer was panic-stricken and brought up with great force against Jack Biddle, and both went down.

"Confound you!" roared the old tar, wrathfully. "What do you mean by thumping me over in this wise?"

"Out of my way, Biddle — I don't want to drown! Out of my way!" answered Yarrow, with a pant. And then he struggled to rise again.

He was so excited that he paid no attention to gentleness, and as a consequence Biddle found himself hurled against some of the iron piping lining the gangway, one section catching him over his unusually large nose, the skin of which was considerably scraped by the operation.

"You infernal landlubber!" was the old tar's comment, and as the quartermaster tried to step away he was caught by the leg and hurled flat.

"Don't! don't!" shrieked Yarrow. "I want to get on deck! Let me up!" and rising once more he shoved forward to the companionway, elbowing everybody right and left as he moved on.

It was some time before Larry could gain the upper deck, to find it so crowded with soldiers and sailors that there was scarcely standing room. Gazing around anxiously, he soon saw Ben and Gilbert and made his way to the pair.

"We are struck, Ben!"

"Yes, Larry, a big iceberg hit us; I just heard one of the officers say so."

"Is there any danger?"

"I don't know."

"Break away there!" came the cry. "Don't block up this deck just now. We are not seriously damaged," and one of the transport's officers appeared, followed by the ship's carpenter and two assistants. "We haven't lost anything but some of our upper railings. But it's a blessing that that iceberg didn't hit us squarely."

The crowd shoved to one side as the carpenter approached. More soldiers were coming up from below, and the Russell boys and Gilbert could scarcely find room in which to breathe. "What a jam!" began the young Southerner, when there came a crack close at hand, and two soldiers standing behind him disappeared from view.

"Man overboard!"

"The railing has given away! Look out there!"

"Throw him a life preserver and get out the life boat!"

"Hilp! hilp! don't let me dhrown like this!" came from one of the soldiers in the water.

"That was Dan Casey who went over!" gasped Ben.

"And the other was Corporal Hawkins of our company," added Gilbert. "Can you see them?"

"No, I can't see a thing in the darkness."

"I see one of them!" cried Larry. "Here you go with that!" he continued to some soldiers behind him.

He put up his hand in the crowd and one life preserver after another was thrown to him. Taking as good an aim as possible he hurled the articles forth, and had the satisfaction of seeing one of them picked up.

By this time word had been passed to the engine room of the transport and the big vessel was coming to a stop. With difficulty a portion of the deck was cleared and one of the small boats was manned and lowered over the side. The officer in charge carried a boat-hook, a life-line and a powerful search-lantern.

"I hope they bring them safe on board," said Ben. "It would be too bad if Casey should be drowned. He is one of the most whole-souled fellows in the command."

"And we can't afford to lose our men in this fashion," added Gilbert. "We want to take them all to Manila."

An anxious ten minutes passed, during which those on board saw but little saving the light on

the small boat as it danced up and down on the billows behind the transport. Then came a distant shout.

"They are safe!"

"Thank God for that," murmured Ben, reverently, and Larry and Gilbert uttered a low "amen."

Soon they saw the small boat returning, and once again room had to be made that it and its occupants could be taken aboard.

"Hurrah for those who went to the rescue!" shouted somebody; and the cheers were given with a will. Now it was known that the transport itself was out of danger a great load was lifted from the minds of all, and once more order prevailed.

The corporal belonging to Gilbert's company had suffered nothing more than a thorough wetting, but poor Dan Casey had not been so fortunate. In his effort to board the life-boat he had lost his grip, and a treacherous wave had cast him headlong at the bow, giving him a severe blow on the head, from which the blood flowed profusely.

"We'll take him to the sick bay," said Ben; and led the way to where a corner of the ship had been partitioned off as a hospital. Casey was

placed on a soft cot, and the surgeon in charge bound up the wound and gave him some stimulants, after which the Irish volunteer exchanged his wet garments for dry ones. He smiled grimly when Ben asked him how he felt.

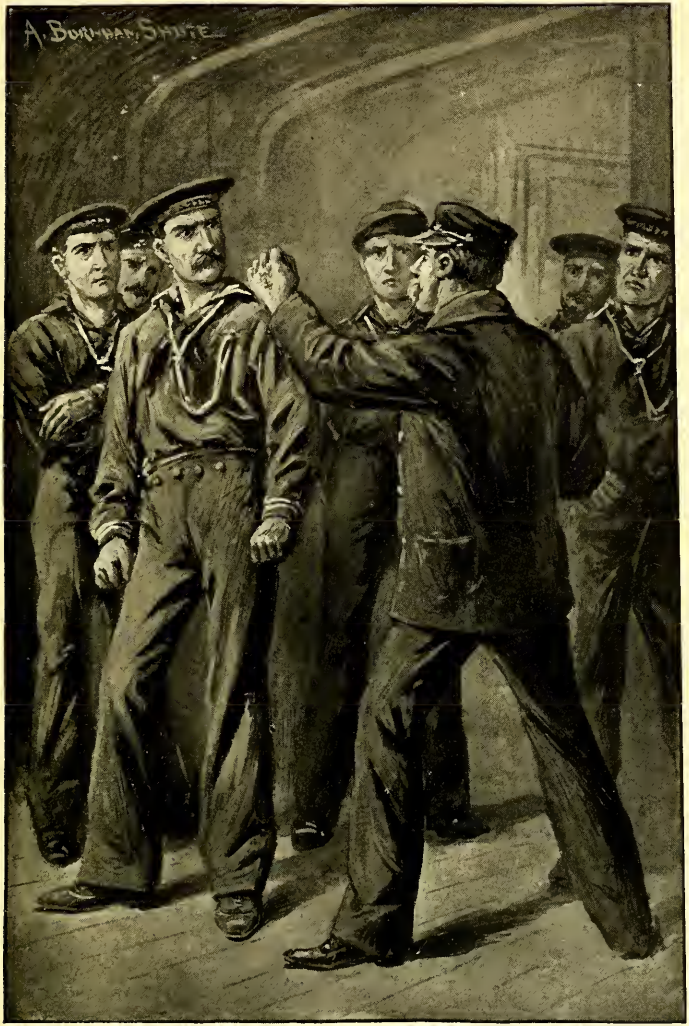
"I'll be meself in the marnin', lieutenant," was Casey's answer. "Say, but I'm bound to catch it at the very start, ain't I now, just as I did in Cuby?" he added ruefully.

The crash had come shortly after twelve o'clock, and for the remainder of the night both soldiers and sailors slept but little. Many remained on deck to watch for more icebergs, but none of any size appeared; and by the following day all danger from this source was past.

One of the most crestfallen men among the naval contingent was Quartermaster Yarrow. Many had noticed his great terror, and he was twitted unmercifully behind his back, but in such a fashion that a good deal of the talk reached his ears, causing him to tremble with rage.

"He's a coward if ever there was one," said Jack Biddle. "Instead of being in Uncle Sam's navy he ought to be on a farm, minding cows."

"Even then he might be afraid of being hooked,"



"I'll show you who you are talking to."— *Page* 57.

put in Mark Olney. "Well, to tell the truth, I think we were all a bit rattled."

"But none of us quite so much as the quartermaster," said Larry. "Why, he went on as if he was getting a fit."

At this juncture Quartermaster Yarrow came up behind them, just in time to catch Larry's words. Instantly he grew red in the face.

"Talking about me behind my back, eh?" he growled. "Nice business to be in. I've a good mind to clap all of you in the brig."

"I don't think you'll do it, quartermaster," replied Biddle, with a boldness that astonished Larry.

"I won't? Why, you rascal — "

"Hold on; I'm no rascal."

"Yes, you are. Get to the brig, and stay there for three days. I'll show you who you are talking to!" and Yarrow shook his fist in Jack Biddle's face.

The old tar grew pale, and as quick as a flash he hurled the fist to one side and caught the quartermaster by the arm.

"Send me to the brig, and you'll be sorry for it," he said quietly but sternly. "It's true you are the officer in charge here, but we men have

some rights that you are bound to respect. Ever since we sailed from Brooklyn you've played the part of a bully and a brute, and I can get every one of our men to testify to it."

"This is an — an outrage!" gasped Yarrow. "It's — it's mutiny!"

"No, it's only plain common sense, quartermaster. Don't let a little petty authority turn your head. If you force me to do it, I'll make a complaint against you, and I'll wager I can get every jackie in our crowd to back me up."

"You will conspire against me!" and Yarrow turned actually white with sudden fear.

"No, we'll only tell the truth, — how you've bulldozed this one and that one, and how you put Noxwell into the brig for no offence at all, and how you acted like a crazy man when the ship was struck, and knocked me flat and skinned my nose." Jack Biddle paused to touch the wounded nasal organ. "We can bring a big score ag'in' you if you force us to do it."

Quartermaster Yarrow glared at the speaker. Could he have done so he would have flogged Jack Biddle. But the old tar was undaunted and stood his ground.

"You'll make a complaint against me, eh?" he said slowly, between his set teeth.

"I will — unless you treat me fairly in the future — and do what's right by young Russell here and Olney. You must remember that I'm a seaman gunner and have seen many years of service, and Uncle Sam will listen to me just as quick as he will to you. Moreover, as soon as we reach Manila your authority will come to an end."

"If Jack Biddle has to make a complaint, I'll do the same," put in Larry, feeling he must stand up for his friend.

"And so will I enter a complaint," added Mark Olney. "I'm not going to stand being bullied any longer."

For fully a minute the quartermaster stood speechless, glaring at first one and then another of the trio. He felt that he was cornered, that what Biddle had said was true, and that with a number of charges piled up against him, it might go hard with him upon reaching Philippine waters.

"You — you — this is a plot to down me," he muttered at last. "I can see through it from beginning to end. You shall all pay dearly for

conspiring against me. Just wait until the proper time comes, and I'll show you all what I can do." And with these decidedly unsatisfactory remarks, he hurried off, leaving our three friends masters, for the present, at least, of the field.

CHAPTER VII

GIBRALTAR, AND THE PLOT AGAINST LARRY

"You did just right," said Ben, when Larry told him of what had occurred. "Yarrow is subject to the authority of the captain of this transport while on the high seas. I found that out from Captain Larchmore. If he makes any more trouble, report him to Captain Feldgard."

"I don't see how a fellow can be so overbearing, Ben. I would rather be liked by those under me than hated."

"A bully's nature is born in him, Larry, — just as a bulldog is a bulldog and nothing less. Before Yarrow can conquer anybody else, he will have to conquer himself."

Two days had passed since Jack Biddle had freed his mind of what was on it; and during that time Quartermaster Yarrow had kept his distance, and nothing more had been said about putting anybody in the brig or fining him. "Guess

he's going to turn over a new leaf," said Olney; but he was mistaken. The unreasonably petty officer was only biding his time before making them smart for the fancied insults he had received.

As I have said, the course of the transport was for the Strait of Gibraltar, and one fine morning a dim outline of distant hills could be seen almost dead ahead. Then the course was shifted from east to southeast, and presently those who were fortunate enough to own field-glasses made out the frowning shore of Cape St. Vincent on the southwest coast of Portugal.

"We'll soon be close to Spanish waters," said Ben. "We are less than two hundred miles from Cadiz, where the Spanish warships were fitted out for the fight with our ships."

"Shall we pass within sight of the city, do you think?" asked Larry, who had just joined him.

"I think not. Our course is to be straight for Gibraltar, so I heard a ship's officer say. I don't think the Spaniards will want to see us. It may be possible that we shall stop at the English city of Gibraltar."

"It's queer that England should have a posses-

sion here, in the heart of the Spanish seacoast," remarked Gilbert.

"She has held it since 1704, Gilbert, after a fierce fight by the English and Dutch combined. Spain and France have both tried to take it from her, but the fortress on the rock is said to be almost impregnable. I should like to stop in the city and see how the English run things."

"I should rather stop in Tangier, on the opposite shore, and get a sight of Morocco," said Larry. "I wonder if that is where all the Morocco leather comes from?"

"Not much!" said Gilbert. "Perhaps it did once, but now I fancy you can get that leather from lots of other places, just as you can get Russian sheet iron right from our own country."

"It's queer we didn't sight any of the Azores Islands," said Ben.

"We passed them in the night," said his brother. "The way we are pushing along I guess the government wants to get us to Manila just as soon as possible."

It was a clear day, much warmer than it had been; and from morning until nightfall they remained in sight of the distant hills, which were

now on the port bow. As darkness closed in on the transport, the lights from the strait appeared, together with those from the lighthouse beyond.

"This settles sightseeing for us," remarked Larry, disappointedly. "By morning I suppose we'll be out of sight of land in the Mediterranean." But he was mistaken, for a little later the transport came to a halt, and she did not go through the strait until morning, after the port regulations had been complied with, and American and British commanders had exchanged the usual courtesies.

The course was now along the northern coasts of Algeria and Tunis, but so far out that nothing was to be seen of Algiers or the other cities lining the sea. Other ships were numerous, including a great number devoted to fishing, for the Mediterranean is alive with species of the finny tribe, tunny-fishing especially being a great industry. Once the transport stopped to take some tunnies aboard, and the Russell boys were surprised at the size of the fishes.

"Why, they must weigh two or three hundred pounds," observed Larry. "What are they —mackerel?"

"A kind of mackerel, yes," replied Jack Biddle. "Some of them weigh a good deal more than these, running up, so I've been told, to a thousand pounds."

"A nice catch with a rod and reel," remarked Gilbert. "I fancy a fellow would go overboard in a hurry — if his line held out."

"And he was foolish enough to hold on," finished Ben.

"I wonder how deep this sea is," went on Larry. "It's so clear that it looks as if it had no bottom."

"Take it all the way through it's about half a mile deep," answered Biddle, who had sailed these waters half a dozen times before. "The greatest depth, I believe, is at Gibraltar, where those high-standing rocks cut down below the surface to a depth of between five and six thousand feet."

By inquiry, the youths learned that the ship was heading almost directly for Cape Bon, on the extreme northeast coast of Tunis. About a hundred miles to the east of the cape lies the island of Sicily. "Perhaps we'll stop there," said Ben. But this was not to be, and once Cape Bon was

rounded, about a week later, the course of the transport was changed to south-southeast and then eastward.

"Hurrah!" cried Mark Olney, one afternoon as he came rushing forward. "I've got good news, fellows."

"Then give it to us as soon as possible, youngster," returned Jack Biddle, while Larry and a number of others gathered around to listen.

"We are approaching the island of Malta, and the commandant says that if the British governor-general is willing, we can land for a day and stretch our legs by a march through the city and into the country beyond."

This was elating news, and it did not take long for it to travel from one end of the transport to the other. Larry and Ben wished to know all about Malta at once, and at last found an old sailor who had stopped there for the best part of a month.

"It's a beautiful little island belonging to the British government," said the tar. "It's about sixty miles south of Sicily, and more than twice that far from the African coast. It's only a small place, about nine miles broad by seventeen miles

long, but it's a very important holding for John Bull, and has a fortress that is nearly as strong as that at Gibraltar. The British Mediterranean Squadron makes Malta its central station."

"I'm glad we are to stop there," put in Larry. "Now perhaps we'll see how our cousins from over the sea manage things."

The capital of Malta is Valetta, and on the following afternoon they rounded the north shore of the island, and steamed into the peaceful harbor, which was dotted with innumerable ships, including several British men-of-war. The city is built on a peninsula, and rises by a series of stone steps, hewn out of the solid rock, the lower portion being connected with the mainland by a large central bridge. Beyond the city could be seen a wide plain, dotted with a luxuriant growth of trees. Besides Valetta there are several other important points, including Medina, the former capital.

Immediately upon the arrival of the transport, the commander of the expedition went ashore, and paid his respects to the governor-general at the palace, and also called upon the British admiral, who happened to be in port. Permission was asked to land the troops and exercise them, and this was

readily granted, and plans for an informal review were arranged. The arrival of the Americans was at once noised around, and before nightfall the busy little city was decorated from end to end with British flags and bunting, entwined here and there with our own red, white, and blue.

"Johnny Bull is going to show his friendliness this time," said Ben. "We'll have to do our best on this parade." The colonel of the regiment and the commander of the artillery said practically the same thing, and orders were at once issued to "brush up." By nine o'clock on the following morning everything was "in apple-pie order," to use Larry's way of expressing it, shoes polished, clothes brushed, and not a button nor a shirt lace missing anywhere. The band, too, had polished up their instruments until they shone like silver.

The only man who was not happy was Quartermaster Yarrow. For twenty-four hours he had speculated upon how to force Larry and Jack Biddle to remain on board, but without daring to make a move in that direction. "If I go too far, they'll press a charge against me," he muttered. "I must find some other way to punish them."

Bully as he was, the quartermaster had made

one friend, or rather toady. This was a little dried-up fellow named Andy Possy, although throughout the transport he was known as the Cat, because of his sly manner. Possy had noted the enmity existing between Yarrow on one side and Biddle and Larry on the other, and he came to the quartermaster when he saw the latter watching the two friends.

"If I was you, quartermaster, I'd show them where they belong," he ventured. "They don't treat you fairly, nohow."

"I know they don't, Andy. But I don't hardly know how to handle them. If I do anything, they'll get up a protest, and you know nearly all the crowd are down on me," was Yarrow's moody reply.

"Yes, I know they are all down on you — all but me," went on the toady. "But I wouldn't stand it, not much! Ain't you the quartermaster, an' over 'em?"

"I know, but still — " Yarrow paused and pulled nervously at his mustache. "Possy, have you got anything in your mind?" he went on, suddenly.

"Well — er — maybe I have, quartermaster. I was only thinkin' to help you, you know."

"To be sure. You seem to be the only friend I have here. What were you thinking of?"

"Thinkin' of how you could get square with Biddle and young Russell."

"Do you mean by making them remain on board?"

"No, I wouldn't do that, because if you do, the crowd will be wuss down on you than ever."

"Well, what were you thinking of, then?"

"I was thinking if it wouldn't be a better plan if you got rid of them entirely."

"Rid of them?"

"That's what I said, quartermaster. If they wasn't on the transport after to-day, then they wouldn't bother you any more; see?"

"I see, but I don't exactly catch your meaning, Andy. Of course you don't mean for me to get rid of them entirely — that is, to do them foul?"

"Oh, no! You can get rid of 'em easier than that — and without committing any great crime, either; that is, if we get a few hours to ourselves when we are on shore."

"And how can it be done?" demanded Yarrow. "Speak right out, Andy; you can trust me."

"If the boys get a few hours to themselves, you

or I can easily manage to separate Biddle and Russell from the rest of the party. Then whoever does the trick can lead 'em to some lonely spot, — for the purpose of showin' 'em some interesting sight, you know, — and there you or I can treat 'em from a bottle of liquor that is drugged. They'll fall down asleep, and if you don't report their absence, the transport will sail without 'em, and they'll be left on the island among strangers, instead of joining the navy at Manila."

"By Jove, Andy, that's a scheme," said Yarrow, softly, his dark face lightening up. "But there are two points which you have overlooked. In the first place, Russell doesn't drink liquor of any kind, and in the second we haven't any drug with which to dose them."

"If Russell don't drink liquor, we can put the drug in a bottle of soft stuff — say lemonade or ginger ale."

"But where is the drug to come from? I don't know what to use that is safe, and if I did, I wouldn't dare to go to the ship's apothecary for it, for fear of giving the whole scheme away."

"This is an English town, and there must be an English druggist here. I know all about knockout

drops, as they are called, and if you say the word, I'll get 'em," went on Andy Possy, in a whisper.

"What will they cost — much?"

"Not more than two or three shillings, — say fifty cents. The scheme's worth trying — if you want to get square," added the Cat, earnestly. He and Jack Biddle had had a row over sleeping-quarters the first night out, and he in consequence bore the old tar no good will. As for Larry, he had tried to become intimate with the lad, but Possy's manner smacked too much of the Bowery, New York, where he belonged; and the youth had given him the cold shoulder, something which had angered Possy not a little.

"All right, we'll try your plan, — if the right chance comes," answered Quartermaster Yarrow, after a slight pause. "But don't breathe a word of this to anybody else, Andy, or it will mean arrest and imprisonment for both of us."

"I'll be as mum as an oyster, quartermaster, trust me," was the cautious response; and then, as one of the regimental officers came up to consult Yarrow in reference to the part the jackies were to take in the coming review, Andy Possy slunk away in the cat-like fashion that had given him his nickname.

CHAPTER VIII

AN ADVENTURE ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA

"HURRAH for a day ashore! May we all have lots of fun and show our English cousins that Uncle Sam is some pumpkins, after all."

"I don't wonder you are enthusiastic, Larry," said Ben, who was putting the finishing touches to his toilet. "But don't let your high spirits run away with you, or that quartermaster will clap you into the brig without warning."

"Humph! He hasn't dared to say a word crosswise since Jack Biddle spoke up as he did," answered the young sailor. "We are all doing our duties, and that is all that can be expected of us. If he made us stay on board, he would get a regular hornets' nest around his head, and I know it."

"If we get the chance, we must take a walk out together, — you, Gilbert, and I," went on the young lieutenant. "It's too bad Walter isn't with us, eh?"

"Oh, he'll have sight-seeing enough, Ben. The *Brooklyn* is bound for a regular tour, you know, along with the rest of the Atlantic Squadron. But I must join our men now," and Larry ran off, whistling as he went. He was a sailor through and through, but a run on shore always pleased him and "gave him a better taste for salt water," as he was wont to say.

Before ten o'clock all the sailors and soldiers were landed, and soon the parade commenced, through the principal streets and then up to the parade ground, where the review was held. The band came first, playing "God Save the Queen," as a compliment to the inhabitants, and then followed the twelve infantry companies and the artillery, with the sailors bringing up in the rear. Flags were flying gayly, and a gun at the fortress thundered out a salute as the reviewing ground was reached, and the governor-general and the admiral viewed the parade from the saddles of their mettlesome horses. Behind these two dignitaries were stationed numerous other officers of the garrison stationed at Malta, and from the warships.

The crowd swarming on all sides was a dense

one, for parades are not numerous in Valetta, and this was the first time that the natives had had a chance of seeing Uncle Sam's soldiers and sailors. As the colonel in command appeared, followed by the first infantry company, there was a loud burst of applause, and this increased as company after company swept by, each line as straight as a string and all keeping step as only our soldiers can when placed on their mettle. "It is fine," murmured the governor-general to the admiral. "Our own infantry could not possibly do better."

"The band makes itself heard," answered the admiral, as his horse began to prance. "I wish they wouldn't give us quite so much music." Probably he would have preferred being on the deck of one of his ships rather than in the saddle just then.

For, as the second company of infantry came up, and the noise increased, the steed he rode gave a turn and a bound, and in a twinkling the naval commander was unseated. He tried to save himself, but the most he could do was to cling to the saddle with his arms, while the horse went plunging forward, rearing and kicking in a truly violent fashion.

"Save the admiral! He'll go down and be trampled to death! Stop the horse!"

Such was the cry which arose, but for the instant the horse seemed so vicious, and so bent upon mischief, that hardly anybody ran to the naval officer's assistance. In the meantime the steed rushed onward, straight for Company B, of which we know Gilbert was one of the sergeants.

The young Southerner saw the steed coming and started to leap to one side. Then, urged by a sudden inspiration, he sprang forward, and as quick as a wink he had the horse by the bridle, to which he held fast with all his strength. Again the steed reared and plunged, shaking his head from side to side, but Gilbert's grip did not relax, and, at last, finding himself thus suddenly mastered, the beast became quiet, and the admiral slipped to the ground.

"I reckon he will be all right now, sir," said Gilbert, as soon as the violence of his exertions would permit him to speak. "The band frightened him a bit, that's all."

"I — ah — suppose that's true," answered the naval officer. "You're a brave fellow to stop him as you did."

"Oh, that's nothing, sir. I'm used to horses — used to belong to our Rough Riders," and a twinkle shone in the sergeant's eye.

"The Rough Riders that fought in Cuba?" questioned the admiral, with sudden interest.

"Yes, sir."

"Then, no wonder you weren't afraid of this beast. I've heard those men weren't afraid of anything." The admiral swung himself into the saddle again, making sure that he now held a tight rein. "I owe you one for this, sergeant, and I shall not forget you;" and then he rode back to the governor-general's side, leaving Gilbert to follow up Company B on the double-quick. The incident had caused a slight break in the ranks, but this was speedily straightened out.

The review at an end, the soldiers and sailors left the parade ground, and after a hearty dinner struck out again through the streets of the city and then on to a country road lined with fine residences and beautiful shade trees. The day was mild and clear, and it can truthfully be said that the majority of those in the crowd had never enjoyed themselves so much. Formalities were

cast aside, and all moved forward in irregular lines, walking with such chums as were convenient.

"They tell me you acted the part of a hero, Gilbert," said Ben, as soon as they were together. "This will be a big feather in your cap. Perhaps the admiral will decorate you with the Order of the Horse, or something like that."

The young Southerner laughed. "Are you praising me or poking fun at me?" he asked.

"I'm praising you, to be sure. And you certainly deserve it."

"Thanks. But let us talk about something else," said Gilbert, modestly.

"I will, after you've told me what the admiral said. It's something to have talked to him."

"He thanked me."

"Is that all?"

"Well, he said he owed me one and should not forget me."

"That was nice. Perhaps he'll send you a big reward."

"I don't want any reward, Ben, and I don't want to be joked about it. Where are we going?"

"That is more than I know, excepting that we are to take it easy in a patch of woods some dis-

tance ahead. For my part, I should have liked to remain in Valetta. They say that there is a fine cathedral there, as well as a university, a public library, and an armory full of relics, attached to the palace."

"Perhaps we'll get a chance to visit those places this evening — if we're allowed on shore."

"No, we're to be on board again at eight o'clock sharp. I heard the order before we started. By the way, where is Larry?"

"Back among the sailors, I suppose."

"I wish he would come up, and we could be all together. Let us drop back and look for him," said the young lieutenant.

The party had branched off on a side road, which was somewhat rocky and narrow. Here the houses were much scattered, and at a distance could be seen the blue waters of the sea. Before they could turn back, the command came to halt.

"We shall remain here for two hours," said the officer in charge. "During that time each man will be allowed to go where he pleases, but he must take care that no private property is invaded, and no depredations of any kind will be permitted. During our stay on English soil, I expect each

man to act the part of a gentleman. Any offence whatever will be punished heavily."

"That's plain enough," whispered Gilbert. "I reckon that will sober those who have any inclination to 'get gay,' as the saying goes."

"It's pretty hard to keep them all in harness," returned Ben, with a shake of his head. "I myself feel like a boy just out of school. Look at that, now," and he pointed to where some soldiers were climbing several trees like so many cats, while others were doing circus tricks in the grass. "When he's let loose like this, a man's a boy, no matter how old in years he gets."

Pushing their way through the grove of trees, the pair made their way to where a number of the sailors were taking it easy, content to lie upon Mother Earth and smoke their pipes, in preference to tramping around in the sun.

"I don't see Larry anywhere," said the young lieutenant, after a close look around.

"Oh, I suppose he has gone off with some of the other tars," returned Gilbert.

"It's odd if he has, for I spoke to him about our taking a walk together."

"He may be looking for us. It's no easy

matter to find anybody in such a big crowd as this."

They walked around for half an hour, but without catching sight of the young sailor. Then Gilbert proposed a walk to the cliff overlooking the Mediterranean, and Ben reluctantly consented. The view from the cliff was very fine, and it was almost time to re-form companies when they came back, each carrying some curious shells he had picked up.

"No Larry yet," said Ben; still he was not alarmed, knowing that his younger brother was forgetful at times, and in the habit of doing whatever came into his head first. Then the companies began to form; and presently the march back to the city was begun.

On the main street there was another demonstration, and the garrison band came out to help along the celebration. British sailors and soldiers mingled with our own, as though they were brothers in country as well as in blood. "Tell you what, Anglo-Saxon blood counts for something," remarked Gilbert, as he viewed the scene, and shook hands with several British soldiers with whom he had become acquainted.

"Right you are, sir," answered a tall lieutenant of the Royal Guard. "Anglo-Saxon blood is bound to rule the world. Good-by to you, and the best of success at Manila;" and so they parted, with a rousing cheer on both sides. That visit to Malta was one which those American soldiers and sailors were bound never to forget.

It was dark when the last of the troops filed on board of the transport. All were tired but happy. It took some little time to restore order, and then, contrary to Quartermaster Yarrow's expectation, a close roll-call was ordered, and all hands were lined up for that purpose.

The roll-call revealed the fact that a certain Captain Alvord, of Company H, Larry Russell, and Jack Biddle were missing.

CHAPTER IX

THE PLOT COMES TO A HEAD

THE march into the country behind the English city of Valetta was one of great pleasure to Larry and to Jack Biddle, especially so to the old sailor, who had hardly set foot on shore for two years, having been transferred directly from the *Texas* to the transport.

"I love the sea," said Biddle, as they trudged along — for old sailors cannot march, they having too much of the "sea roll" in their legs. "But once in a while I get a regular hankerin' after land, and then I've got to go ashore or stand a spell of sickness."

"You are not much different from all of us, Jack," answered Larry, as he looked behind them. "What a crowd of natives are following us!"

"I suppose they think we are a sight — like a Wild West show," put in Mark Olney. "What

are these natives anyway? I can't understand a word they say."

"Most of them speak Italian, I believe. But Malta has had such a checkered career that the people speak French, Spanish, Arabic, and half a dozen combinations as well, including an English that nobody but an experienced Britisher can understand."

On they went. As they progressed, Larry tried to get to the regiment of infantry, to hunt up Ben, but the battery was between, and the road was too narrow for his purpose.

The outing party, if I may call it such, had scarcely come to a halt when Andy Possy ran up to where Larry and Biddle had become somewhat separated from the others. "Say, you fellows," he said, "Quartermaster Yarrow wants to see you."

"To see us?" questioned Larry. "What about?"

"He's got something he wants the three of us to do," answered the sly one. "He's over here," — with a wave of his hand. "Come on."

"I didn't know as how we were to do any work to-day," grumbled Jack Biddle; nevertheless, he followed Andy Possy, and Larry did the same.

The way was out of the grove to a side road leading along the cliff already described.

"I guess he has gone on ahead," said Possy when a certain spot was reached. "I left him here." He shaded his face and looked up the path. "Ah, there he is, waving us to come on."

After skirting the cliff for several hundred feet, the road turned inland and ran up the rocky side of a hill, at the top of which could be seen a native hotel which commanded a superb view of the Mediterranean Sea. "That's the place he mentioned," said Possy. "There he is on the veranda."

The climb up the hill was by no means easy, the path being one that was but little used. By the time the hotel was gained, Larry was pretty well winded and glad enough to sit down.

"I'm sorry I had to make you come so far," said Yarrow, in apparent sympathy. "But if this trip pays what I think it will, it will be a few dollars in both of your pockets."

"What do you want of us?" demanded Jack Biddle.

"I'll explain in a few minutes, Biddle. But first we will have something to drink — at my expense."

"Well, I won't object to that, quartermaster. I'm uncommon dry," responded the old sailor, his manner softening a little.

"I don't drink liquor, but I wouldn't object to something else," added Larry.

"Ginger ale or soda water?"

"Soda water will do very well. But won't we have to hurry in getting back, sir?"

"No, we have an hour and a half yet. We are not to start so early. That notice given out was only a bluff, to keep the men from going too far off. Possy, get the drinks from that Englishman inside. Get what you want for yourself and a rum punch for Biddle and for me."

As Andy Possy understood the quartermaster's plan perfectly, he disappeared instantly, to be gone the best part of ten minutes. A waiter, with a trayful of glasses, followed him, but it was Possy who set around the various refreshments.

Larry found the soda water both warm and bitter. Yet he was as dry as anybody, and quickly drained the glass. Biddle lingered over his liquor, but presently that, too, disappeared, together with the other drinks of the party.

"Now we'll take a walk to the buildings back

of this hotel, and I'll show you what brought me here," said Quartermaster Yarrow, as he eyed Larry and Biddle keenly. Possy was behind the pair and nodded significantly.

"All right; I'm ready, sir," answered Larry, as he arose and stretched himself. Biddle also got up, yawning at the same time. Possy caught him by the arm, and they walked off together, while Yarrow ranged up beside Larry.

Unsuspecting the plot against them, the two friends allowed themselves to be led along another rocky path until the ruins of an old monastery were reached. By this time Biddle was yawning more than ever, while for some reason Larry could scarcely keep his eyes open.

"Oh, how sleepy I am all at once!" murmured the young sailor. "I can hardly put one foot before the other."

"The climb has tired you," answered Yarrow. "Here, sit down for a few minutes," and he led the way to a grassy nook in the shade of a crumbled stone wall. Larry was perfectly willing to rest, and hardly had his body touched the sward than he closed his eyes. He tried to rouse up, but the effort was a failure, and soon he was in

the soundest kind of a sleep — the sleep of the drugged.

"Hello, Russell is resting; guess I'll rest a bit, too," cried Jack Biddle, on coming up. "Quartermaster, that punch was powerful stuff."

"So it was, Biddle, but it touched the right spot, eh?"

"It's made me heavy-eyed — I don't feel just right."

"Perhaps the walk in the sun affected you — after being on shipboard so long."

"That must be it." Jack Biddle scratched his head. "But I never felt so befuddled before. I — I can't see straight — and I ain't full either."

"Of course you are not full. You must be sick. Want any medicine?"

"I — I — don't know. Everything is goin' round — and — and — That liquor — Yarrow, did you — you play any — game —" Jack Biddle could not finish, and with his suspicion that all was not as it should be he keeled over insensible.

"The drug has done the business," muttered Andy Possy, with a satisfied gleam in his cat-like eyes. "I told you it wouldn't fail, quartermaster."

"You don't think it will kill either of them?" demanded Yarrow, nervously.

"Kill 'em? Not at all. Why, that game has been played on the Bowery in New York a thousand times. I knew just how much to give each of 'em."

"And how long do you suppose they'll sleep?"

"Till to-morrow morning, most likely. Come, let us get 'em out of the way before anybody sees them."

Approaching Larry, the rascals picked up the unconscious form and started into the ruins with it. Passing through a huge archway and across a deserted courtyard, they entered an apartment which was gloomy, dusty, and covered with cobwebs.

"This is good enough," said Yarrow. "Drop him."

"I was going to put 'em both in the cellar," grinned Possy. "Some tourists might come here and spoil our game."

"Is the cellar a fit place?"

"Good enough for them."

"All right then. But hurry up, or we'll get left ourselves."

Passing through the apartment, they came to a long, low hall. At one side was a flight of stone steps leading downward. The steps were covered with rubbish and they had to move with care, for fear of slipping and landing at the bottom in a heap.

"Here we are," said the Cat, at length, and led the way into what had once been a fine underground apartment, but which was now little better than a hole in the ground. Larry was placed on a pile of musty straw; and the two hastened back for Jack Biddle. The old sailor was heavy, and Yarrow found himself almost winded when the job was completed.

"Now good-by, and may you remain on the island of Malta for a long while to come," remarked the quartermaster, as he shook his fist at the sleeping forms. Possy said nothing, but came up the stairs behind his superior, and at the door he paused long enough to close and bolt the barrier.

"Going to lock them in, eh?" said the petty officer. "It's all right enough, but they may starve to death."

"Then let 'em starve," was Possy's heartless response. "Come on," and he caught the quartermaster by the arm. In a minute more they were

on their way back to the grove where the others from the transport were resting. Before reaching there, however, they took care to separate, — Yarrow joining the other officers, and Possy finding his way among the sailors.

"Possy, have you seen anything of Larry Russell?" It was Mark Olney who asked the question, just after the rascal had arrived.

The unexpected question startled the Cat. "Why — er — what's that?" he stammered.

"Have you seen anything of Larry Russell? His brother, the lieutenant, is looking for him."

"Oh, I guess he's around somewhere," growled Possy. "I ain't keepin' track of everybody that's here. Let his brother find him if he wants him." And to avoid further questioning, he hurried off, and saw to it during the remainder of the outing that he did not come in contact with either Ben or Gilbert.

CHAPTER X

STRANDED AMONG STRANGERS

"Oh my, how my head aches!"

It was Larry who uttered the remark, as he sat up in the darkness, stretched himself, and rubbed his eyes. For several minutes he could scarcely collect his scattered senses. Then the truth dawned upon him.

"I went to sleep on the grass beside that wall," he mused. "Where can I be now? Certainly not on shipboard." He felt of the stone flooring and straw beneath him. "Well, if this isn't the queerest yet!"

Presently his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, and at a distance he made out several small windows, each heavily barred. Then his gaze turned and he saw Jack Biddle lying but a few feet away, and breathing heavily.

"Jack! Jack! Wake up! Something is the

matter," he called out, and going to his friend he shook him vigorously.

"Wha-what's that?" came in drowsy tones. "Why can't you let me sleep a bit longer? How many bells is it?"

"Never mind about the bells; we must get back to the transport," interrupted the youth. "If we don't get back, we'll be left. Come, get up," and he pulled Jack by the arm.

Slowly the old sailor arose, as much bewildered as Larry had been. But presently he gave a snort. "Where is Yarrow and that Possy?" he asked sharply. "They are responsible for this. That liquor was drugged, and I know it."

"Drugged?"

"That's what I said, lad. It's a trick on us. We were fools to trust the quartermaster and the Cat. Where are we?"

"I don't know. Some place that looks like a cellar."

"They must have brought us here. Oh, the villains! Just wait till I get my hands on 'em, that's all!"

"But I don't understand, Jack. Why would they bring us here?"

"It's as plain as day. Possy is down on me, and the quartermaster is down on both of us. They thought it would be a fine thing to leave us in Malta, stranded."

"Can that be possible?" cried Larry. He thought for a moment. "It must be so. That soda water was very bitter, — not a bit natural, — and I felt sleepy right after drinking it. Oh, Jack, what shall we do?"

"Get out of here, and see if we can't catch the transport before she sails," was the quick reply. "Come on; where's the door?"

They started on a hunt and the door was speedily found. Try their best they could not budge the barrier, which was a massive affair of hard wood and several inches thick.

"We're locked in," said Larry, with a groan. "Now what's to do?"

"Maybe we can crawl through one of the windows," suggested the old sailor. Making their way to the nearest of these openings they tried it, but without success.

"We're prisoners," said the boy. "I wonder how long we have been here."

"I can't say, Larry. It is still daylight; that is

one satisfaction. I don't believe the transport will leave Valetta harbor until to-morrow morning."

From one window they went to another, until they found one where several of the bars seemed to be loose. With a strong twist Jack Biddle brought one of the irons from its fastenings. Using this as a lever he pried off a second bar; and the way of escape was opened.

Coming into the outer air at a spot not far distant from the path leading to the hotel, they saw that they had been carried into the monastery by Yarrow and his tool. "It's no fit place for sailors to be in," growled Biddle. "I never want to see it ag'in!" And Larry agreed with him.

They had covered about half the distance to the hotel when the youth set up a sudden shout. "Oh, Jack, we've slept all day and all night!"

"What's that!" demanded the old tar, quickly.

"This is not the same day — it's the next day. See, the sun is in the east, not the west."

"By ginger, that's so!" burst from the old tar. "That drug was more powerful than I thought." His face fell. "Larry, the jig is up."

"You mean that the transport has left us behind?"

"Exactly."

"Would those in charge do that?"

"Perhaps they don't know we are missing — the quartermaster wouldn't report the case."

"To be sure he wouldn't. But — but — I don't believe Ben would sail without me."

"He couldn't help himself — he's as much under orders as anybody, even if he is a lieutenant. Our only hope is that the transport has been delayed, for some reason or another. Come on."

"Shall we stop at the hotel and inquire about Yarrow and Possy?"

"What good will that do? No; the sooner we get back to the dock, the better."

"Perhaps we can get somebody to drive us down," suggested the youth, as they came out on a road skirting the hotel property. "That would save us an hour or two."

"I haven't a cent to pay for a ride."

"I have money with me. And here comes a turnout, now," went on the boy, as a native wagon drawn by a pure Arabian horse came into sight. On the front seat sat a dark-looking man dressed in a peasant's costume. "Hi, there, stop!" he called out.

The native did as requested, and running to him, Larry mentioned what was wanted. But at this the man merely shook his head and answered in a patois which to the Americans was totally unintelligible.

"Here's a pickle; he can't talk English, and I can't talk his language, Jack."

"Then we don't ride with him, lad."

"Hold on, I'll try another plan," continued the youth. He brought a silver dollar from his pocket. "Valetta," he said, pointing to himself and his companion, then to the carriage and then to the silver piece, which he thrust forward. Then he went through the motion of running and said Valetta again and added "*Americanos*."

The native now understood and laughed. Jumping to the ground, he helped them into the carriage. "Valetta, señor," he said, and hopped back to his seat. With a crack of a long whip the horse was started up, and off they bowled down a smooth road leading straight into the capital. The way was a pleasant one, lined with stately trees, shrubbery, and pretty residences, with here and there a patch of green fields. Under other circumstances Larry would have enjoyed the ride, but now he

was too much disturbed in mind to do but little excepting to urge the horse forward whenever the steed seemed inclined to drop into a walk.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon when the city was gained and they alighted at a spot near the shipping. Having paid the driver, they turned to several English soldiers who stood near and who had watched their coming with interest.

"Your ship sailed about two hours ago," said one of the soldiers, in reply to Larry's almost breathless question. "So you were left behind? Too bad!"

"You are certain she has gone?" put in Jack Biddle.

"Oh, yes; we fellows saw her off ourselves, didn't we, Garwick?"

"So we did, Fenton. Yes, she is gone and well out of sight by this time."

The hearts of both Larry and his old friend sank within them. Here was "a state of things" truly. What was to be done next?

"We're stranded, just as I feared," said Biddle. "And I haven't a cent."

"I've got three dollars and a half. But that isn't the thing. We don't want to stay here," rejoined Larry, desperately.

"We'll have to stay, seeing that we can't whistle the transport back. But what we are to do here is more than I can settle, just now."

"I wonder if there are any other American vessels here?"

"Possibly there are, — but none bound for Manila."

"Well, we'll have to do something," groaned Larry.

In a disconsolate frame of mind the pair strolled down to the dock where they had landed the day before. The English soldiers followed them, offering their sincere sympathy. "We'll take care of you, boys, if nothing better turns up," said one. "You won't be left out in the cold; never fear."

"That is very kind of you," answered Larry, while Jack Biddle nodded. "But we would rather get back to our ship, if the thing can be managed." He turned suddenly to his companion. "Our transport will have to stop at Port Said for the necessary papers to go through the Suez Canal. Perhaps we can get aboard some fast vessel bound for that port and overtake our ship."

"Creation, Larry, that's an idee! And here's another idee," went on Biddle. "Perhaps we can

telegraph to Port Said that we are safe and coming along. If we do that, they can't court-martial us as deserters, — which they might do if we stayed here."

"The thing of it is, to find the ship, Jack. Let us lose no time in making inquiries."

Larry led the way along the shipping, and Biddle followed. A dozen docks were stopped at, but the only ship they could find bound for Port Said was a Turkish craft that was not to sail for three days.

"That doesn't look encouraging — " began Larry, when he stopped short, as he saw one of the English soldiers they had first met, running toward them. "What is it?" he asked.

"Here is a chance for you to rejoin your ship," answered the soldier, quickly. "The steam launch, *Queen*, is to take an American officer out. She's going to sail at once. Hurry up, this way!"

Larry waited to hear no more, nor did Biddle, but both struck out after the Briton with all speed. Soon another dock was gained, at the foot of which lay a heavy steam launch, ready to cast off. On the deck stood an American officer whom Larry recognized as the captain of one of the infantry companies of Ben's regiment.

"Do you men belong to quarter-master Yarrow's squad?"—*Page* 101.

"Wait a moment, please!" he cried out. "Are you bound for our transport?"

"I am," was the ready reply. "What is the matter with you?"

"We were drugged and left behind. Won't you kindly take us with you?"

"Yes, please take us along, Captain Alvord," put in Jack Biddle, who knew the officer by name. "It's not our fault that we were left ashore."

"Do you men belong to Quartermaster Yarrow's squad?"

"We do," came from both.

"All right then, jump aboard." And as they did so, Captain Alvord continued: "I was left ashore myself, but I am bound to get back to my command somehow. It's lucky you found me when you did. We sail at once."

The commander of Company H was as good as his word, for inside of ten minutes the *Queen* had left the harbor of Valetta behind and was steaming with all swiftness in the direction which the United States transport was supposed to have taken.

CHAPTER XI

THE EXPOSURE OF THE GUILTY ONES

My readers can well imagine how dismayed Ben was when he found out that Larry was missing. "It's too bad!" he said, soberly, to Gilbert. "Now what has become of him, and of that Jack Biddle, do you suppose?"

"I'm sure I can't say, Ben. It's certainly disheartening. And Captain Alvord is missing too. I wonder what the colonel will say to that?"

"Captain Alvord is rich, and can take care of himself. He enlisted only for the glory of it. But with Larry it is different. Besides, I'm certain he wouldn't stay behind of his own free will."

"Oh, I know he wouldn't. It's certainly a mystery."

The news created considerable excitement throughout the transport, and searching parties were at once despatched to bring the missing ones aboard, if they could be found. To divert suspicions, Quarter-

master Yarrow went ashore himself, taking Andy Possy with him.

"We'll be sure to find them," muttered the quartermaster, grimly.

The transport was not to sail until ten o'clock the following morning, and the searching parties remained out the best part of the night, while others went out after breakfast, and with them Ben and Gilbert. On Captain Alvord's account the sailing was delayed until after noon.

At last, however, the commander in charge of the expedition said he would wait no longer. "The sailors have probably deserted," he remarked to those under him. Concerning Captain Alvord he was silent, but he thought the rich young volunteer had become tired of military life and taken "French leave." "He'll skip out for Italy and spend the winter in Rome, and then trust to his wealth to get him out of the scrape," was the commander's comment. He had heard of scions of wealth doing similar things before. Not all those who obtained commissions from our government had their hearts in the work.

If Ben had been sad before, he was utterly downcast when the transport sailed, and had it not been

for his high sense of duty he would have deserted in order to trace his younger brother's whereabouts. "I don't like this at all," he said to his chum, but, much as he wished to do so, Gilbert could give him no consolation.

But good tidings were close at hand. The transport had started to run for Port Said under a full head of steam, but a slight breakdown in the engine-room necessitated a slowing up, and this enabled the *Queen* to come within sight before sundown. In the meantime Larry and Jack Biddle had been treated to a first-class dinner by Captain Alvord, who had listened to their stories with interest and in return had made a most astonishing revelation.

"The steam launch is hailing us!" was the cry that rang throughout the transport, bringing many soldiers and sailors to the deck. Glasses were brought into use, and it was seen that the launch contained half a dozen persons, besides an American officer and two sailors.

"It must be Larry!" cried Ben. "As quickly as he could, he got out his own glasses. "It is, and the others are Biddle and Captain Alvord."

"Hurrah! Our men are coming back!"

shouted Gilbert, and the cheer was taken up on all sides. Soon the launch came alongside, and the lost ones climbed on board by means of a rope ladder. Then the *Queen* returned to Malta, her captain having previously been handsomely paid by the wealthy American.

When Quartermaster Yarrow saw Larry and Biddle approaching, his heart sank like a lump of lead, and he lost no time in drawing out of sight. With him went Possy, and both were as white as a sheet.

"The game is up, Andy, and you are caught."

"I reckon it is you that is caught," stammered the tool, in astonishment and dismay. "It was your plot to get rid of 'em."

"No, it was your plot," growled Yarrow. Each wanted to shift the burden to the other's shoulders.

A hot discussion followed, in the midst of which several sailors came along and told the quartermaster that he and the Cat were wanted in the cabin. "And I reckon it will be putty warm in there," sneered one of the seamen, and ran off before Yarrow could stop him.

When the quartermaster and Possy reached the cabin, they found half a dozen of the higher

officers there, along with those who had just come on board.

"These two sailors make a serious charge against you, quartermaster," said the officer in command, General Kenwood. "They say you drugged them, or had them drugged by your companion, Andrew Possy."

"I had them drugged?" cried Yarrow, in pretended surprise. "This is news to me. Why should I have them drugged?"

"In order that they might be left behind in a strange country, without money and without friends."

"It's fools' talk, sir. Why, I went out to hunt for them, and so did Possy."

"Russell and Biddle tell a strange story, and this story is substantiated in part by what Captain Alvord saw."

"And what did he see?"

"He was at the Hotel Nelson when you stopped there, and he saw Possy get the drinks and put something into two of the glasses — those undoubtedly given to Russell and Biddle."

"I had nothing to do with that, sir. If Possy did anything of the kind, he did it on his own account. I —"

"I didn t do anything on my own account," burst out the tool, in terror, and anxious to clear his own record. "Whatever I did was done by Quartermaster Yarrow's orders."

"And what did you do?"

Andy Possy hesitated and looked first at General Kenwood, then at his two accusers, and then at his companion in crime. "I—" he began, when the quartermaster cut him short.

"Don't tell any falsehoods about me," burst out Yarrow. "I won't stand it."

"I ain't going to get into trouble for nothin'," returned Possy. "The—a—the stuff I put into the glasses was—er—medicine that the quartermaster gave me."

"It's not true. I positively gave him nothing," shouted Yarrow, red in the face.

"Quartermaster, you will keep quiet while Possy tells his story," interposed General Kenwood, sternly.

"Yes, but see here, general—"

"Not another word, or I will have the sergeant-at-arms place you under arrest."

At these words the quartermaster staggered back. He wanted to say something more, but the words

died away on his lips. Then the general in charge turned to Possy.

The tool was "badly rattled," to use a popular phrase, and for several seconds could say but little. Then the story he told was so improbable that nobody believed him. Upon a cross-examination he broke down utterly.

"General, don't be hard on me, and I'll tell you everything," he whined, and then gave a fairly clear statement of facts, leaving out only that he had suggested the drugging to Yarrow.

While Possy was talking, two sailors came in, and word was passed to General Kenwood that they had something important to say.

"Well, what is it, my man?" asked the general, as soon as he had finished with the Cat, as he turned to one of the newcomers.

"If you please, sir, we just heard the quartermaster and Possy quarrelling," answered one of the tars. "Each was blaming the other for what they had done."

"Tell me what was said."

The sailor did so, as nearly as he could remember, and the second tar corroborated his story. This tallied very nearly with what Possy had confessed,

and in the minds of all there was no longer any doubt but that Quartermaster Yarrow and the sly one were equally guilty.

As soon as this was made clear the cabin was vacated by all but General Kenwood and the other officers and the guilty ones. The commandant of the expedition then turned to the man who had had charge of the sailors.

"Quartermaster Yarrow, you have been guilty of a grave crime," he said sternly. "You have tried to get two of our sailors into trouble, and but for a lucky accident to a carriage whereby Captain Alvord was detained at Malta, these sailors would have been left behind, in a strange land, without money or without friends, and with the word 'Deserted' written after each name on the muster-roll. I am not in a position to try you by court-martial, leaving that to the naval authorities when we arrive at Manila, but in the meantime I shall place you under arrest."

"Arrest!" gasped Yarrow.

"Yes, arrest; and I shall, moreover, strip you of all insignia of rank. You, in my individual opinion, are not fit to wear the stripes of a quartermaster."

"Well, if you arrest me, who is going to command the sailors?"

"The next to you in rank."

"There doesn't happen to be any." Quartermaster Yarrow bit his lip. "I guess you had better leave me in charge until we get to Manila, general. I don't know as this proceeding is regular. Your authority is only over the soldiers."

"'And over all others taking passage on the transport,'" returned General Kenwood, quoting from his orders, and at the same time pointing to the line in question. "If there is no other officer among you, I will place the oldest sailor in command, providing he seems competent."

"Why, the oldest sailor is Jack Biddle!"

"Indeed! Then I must have a talk with him."

"You would put him in my place?" cried Yarrow, bitterly. The blow was almost too much for him.

"And why not, if his record is a clean one?"

"And what are you going to do with me?"

"Place you on your good behavior until we reach Manila."

"And will you do the same with me?" put in Possy, eagerly. He had had a vision of six or eight weeks in a hot brig, on prison diet.

"Will you promise to behave yourself?"

"I will, sir."

"Very well, I will let you go at that. But remember," added General Kenwood, impressively, "I shall keep an eye on both of you, and at the least sign of wrongdoing your liberty shall be cut off. And another thing: if this transport makes any more stops, both of you are to remain aboard ship."

"I can't go ashore?" questioned Yarrow.

"No; both of you must remain aboard until I place you in Admiral Dewey's charge."

With these words the quartermaster and his former tool were dismissed, — to get into a quarrel of words and blows later on. Each punished the other quite severely, and for a week after Yarrow walked around with a swollen nose, while Possy wore a black patch over his left eye. But neither said anything of the encounter, fearful that close confinement would follow.

CHAPTER XII

THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL TO THE RED SEA

"I've news for you, Jack. You are to command our party after this. I just got the word from Captain Alvord, who received it from General Kenwood."

"Me command?" cried the old tar. "Why, how's that?"

"There are no officers beside Yarrow, and you are the oldest sailor. Allow me to congratulate you, Commander Biddle."

"Well, by creation!" ejaculated Biddle. "This gits me, Larry. Why, I never did any commanding before."

"No, but you'll be all right, Jack. Now, be sure and make us toe the mark."

Biddle's face took on a comical look. "All right, if I must, I must, an' there's an end on't," he returned. "But this knocks me, yes, it does. Won't Yarrow be glad to know it!"

"He and Possy are to have their liberty until we reach Manila. We must keep our eyes open and watch them."

"Right you are, lad. No more funny work around Jack Biddle. After this I'll make sure of what I am drinking."

Soon after this General Kenwood came to see the sailors and to have a talk with Biddle, after which the old tar called his new command together and put them through a drill for the military man's benefit. Biddle was really an excellent man-o'-war's man and deserved an office more than Yarrow did, and General Kenwood expressed himself well satisfied with the new order of things. Both Yarrow and Possy tried to get out of sight, but this was not allowed, and the ex-quartermaster and his tool were made to drill with the others, much to the former's disgust.

The transport was now running directly for Port Said, which is situated at the northern entrance to the Suez Canal. As a whole the weather was delightful, although it rained several times. But the cold wave which had been encountered on the Atlantic was a thing of the past, even though it was drawing close to Christmas.

"I'd like to know something about the Suez Canal," remarked Larry. "I know it connects the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, and that Port Said is at one end and Suez at the other, and that is all I do know. Of course it is not such a canal as we have in New York State and elsewhere."

"Hardly," said Gilbert, to whom he was speaking. "I was reading up on the point. This canal is eighty-five miles long, and is cut through sand and almost solid rock. The average width is three hundred feet at the top and seventy-five feet at the bottom, and the water is supposed to be from twenty-six to thirty feet deep. Each end is extended out into the sea for a long distance, to keep the channel from filling up, big stone walls being built for that purpose."

"Such a canal must have cost a lot of money, Gilbert."

"Something like fifty million dollars — and it keeps on costing a good bit each year for repairs and the like. But even so, it's a good investment, for lots of ships use this canal in preference to sailing around the southern coast of Africa, and of course everybody who goes through has to pay."

"Do you know what they charge?" put in Ben,

who was as much interested in the subject as any one.

"For boats the charge is ten francs per ton and for passengers ten francs per head."

"Let me see; a franc is about nineteen cents, so the rate of fare for each of us will be one dollar and ninety cents. As we are carrying over sixteen hundred soldiers and sailors that will mean over three thousand dollars to the canal company, — not to speak of what the captain will have to pay for the vessel. No wonder the canal is a good thing."

"Yes, but even if it costs five or six thousand dollars to get through, that is cheaper than going around the Cape of Good Hope," said Gilbert. He paused for a moment, "Do you fellows know that when we reach Port Said we'll be close to Palestine and only two or three hundred miles from Jerusalem?"

"I'd like to spend Christmas there!" cried Larry.

"So should I," rejoined Ben. "A Christmas in Jerusalem would be something to talk about when a fellow got home again." His face grew sober. "But we are on a different mission now, and must do our duty, 'rendering unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's';" and there the talk dropped.

Before the canal had been built Port Said had been a village of small importance, but now it was a city of ten thousand inhabitants, and when the transport glided into the harbor, our boys were astonished at the shipping assembled there, the water being a regular forest of masts and smoke-stacks. The transport remained at Port Said but four hours, and then started for Suez at speed of six knots an hour, faster travelling by steam being prohibited.

"What a dreary stretch of country," was Ben's remark, as he surveyed a wide expanse of sand. "And how hot it looks."

"They have very little rain here," answered an officer who had visited the vicinity before. "Sometimes they don't have a storm in one or two years."

"And what do they do for drinking water?"

"They have a fresh-water canal extending from the River Nile to Temsah Lake, close by here. But lots of folks suffer inland, nevertheless."

"That wouldn't suit me. I'd rather live in the United States."

"No better country, my lad, and you'll find it so, even if you rove the world over," replied the officer, earnestly.

At Suez the prospect was no better than inland. The walled city, inhabited by Egyptians, English, French, and many other people, lay in a very desert of sand which seemed to glow like molten lead even in this December sun. Beyond was the Gulf of Suez, leading directly into the Red Sea.

"We're in the land of sand," observed Larry. "No Arabian or Egyptian life for me, — although I shouldn't mind spending a little time in the Holy Land, looking around."

The Gulf of Suez left behind, the transport headed directly down the Red Sea, past Suakin and other points of more or less importance, to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden, a journey of over a thousand miles.

"Merry Christmas!" was the greeting which went the round one clear morning, just before the straits were reached. "And how do you like Christmas in the summer time?"

"It feels mighty queer," said Ben. "This is more like Decoration Day weather. I wonder if they ever had any snow here."

"I don't believe so," answered Gilbert. "But they have sandstorms, and they are more cutting than snow and hail combined."

It was "a green Christmas without greens," as Jack Biddle put it, yet both soldiers and sailors managed to amuse themselves in various ways. Early in the morning there was a church service for those who cared to attend, and at noon General Kenwood astonished and delighted all hands by giving them a turkey and cranberry sauce dinner — something nobody had dreamed of getting. Bags of nuts and fruit from Suez, not to mention extra large Arabian dates, were also forthcoming, and in the afternoon pretty much all discipline was relaxed, and the band gave a concert of popular airs.

"We're not so badly off," remarked Mark Olney. "I wouldn't mind spending another Christmas like this."

"Sure an' at this rate I wouldn't be afther mindin' Christmas twict a year," put in Dan Casey. "I niver had so many good things before in me life!"

"Ton't you vos eat too much, or maybe you vos die of indigestion," said Carl Stummer, with his mouth full of mince pie. "Dake your time like I vos do."

"Take me time!" roared Casey. "Sure an' it's

yourself as is tryin' to ate a whole pie to onct. Stummer, if yez don't look out yez will get so fat the gineral will make yez run on ahead av the regiment an' fall down for a breastworks whin the inimy appears!" And at this sally a laugh went up.

"Why do they call this sea Red?" asked Larry, some time later.

"That's a disputed question," answered Gilbert. "Some say from the red coral and rocks to be found here, and others say from the seaweed that at times gives it something of that color. The Greeks called it the Red Sea from the earliest times. Do you notice how carefully we are running? That's because of the coral reefs. They bother even the native pilots."

"So we are coming to 'India's coral strand'?" quoted Larry. "Well, I'll not be sorry when we strike the Indian Ocean and steam direct for the Philippines. But we have still six or seven thousand miles to go."

"I want to get on land — among the soldiers around Manila," said Ben. "I wish we could get news from there."

"One or two of the officers got papers at Port Said — English publications."

"Yes, but the news in them was most unsatisfactory, simply stating that both sides at Manila seemed to be playing a waiting game."

"Well, we'll know all about it in a few weeks more," rejoined Gilbert. "Perhaps we'll get news at Colombo, on the island of Ceylon, if we stop there, — or at Singapore."

The run through the Gulf of Aden into the Indian Ocean, or, more properly perhaps, the Arabian Sea, was made without particular incident. They were now down to only ten degrees above the equator, and New Year's Day proved a "scorcher," to use Ben's term of expressing it. The only times that it was cool were early in the morning and late in the evening. During the midday hours the sun beat down so fiercely that nobody thought of going on the unprotected portions of the spar deck unless it was absolutely necessary. Everywhere the transport began to smell of tar, which oozed from all the outer seams.

"We're in the tropics now," said Larry. "It puts me in mind of life on the old *Columbia*. How do you like it?"

"Oh, I guess I'll get used to it," answered the panting Ben, who sat in what was supposed to be

a cool passageway, fanning himself. "I trust it isn't much worse in Manila. If it is, I don't see how our boys are going to stand much marching in the sun."

"How about a campaign inland?" questioned Gilbert. "This beats Cuba, eh?"

"Indeed it does, Gilbert. You can thank your stars that you were born down South."

"I suppose I can. Of course I feel warm, but I don't think I am half as uncomfortable as you."

"Sure an' I could slape in a tub av ice-water," remarked Casey, loud enough for all to hear. "Carl, phwat do you say?"

"I vos chust dinking apout dem natives," answered the German volunteer. "I ton't vonder da vos tress in noddings put der lightest kloding. I dink I vos drow half of mine outfit oferpoard pefore long, hey?"

A gentle southeast wind had been blowing, but toward nightfall this died out utterly, leaving the air stifling. "No sleep to-night," grumbled Ben.

"No, I don't think we shall sleep much," answered Larry, who had been studying the sky.

"Boys, you are going to have a big shaking up before morning."

"What do you mean?" asked Gilbert.

"I mean that there is a storm coming up, and, most likely, it will be a regular hurricane."

CHAPTER XIII

A HURRICANE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

LARRY was right; a hurricane was on the way, and it struck the transport shortly before midnight. The wind whistled along the upper deck and through the rigging, and the rain came down in torrents, finding its way into every opening.

"It's a corker," remarked Gilbert, as he tried in vain to stand upright. "It feels to me as if the ship was going over."

"What must such a storm be in a sailing-vessel?" remarked Ben. "Larry has been through them — when he first sailed on the Pacific and the China Sea."

The sailors, of course, did not mind it so much, many of them being accustomed to just as heavy storms, but among the soldiers there was at times almost a panic, as scores of them went headlong, slipping and sliding in all directions.

"Sure an' it's worse nor a fellow learnin' to

skate!" gasped Dan Casey, as he clung to the iron uprights of his cot-hammock. "Talk about layin' down! Sure, an' I'll be layin' down in a minit, — look out!" And as the ship took another pitch, his grasp loosened and away he went down the passageway, to bring up feet first into Stummer's stomach; and both went down in a heap and rolled over.

"Vot for you done dot?" gasped the German volunteer, as soon as he could disengage himself and catch his breath. "Do you dink dis vos a circus tent, Dan?"

"Sure, an' that's phwat it is, Carl, me b'y, wid us as the acrobats. Here ye are ag'in!" And once more Casey went down. Carl tried to run off, but simply collided with Ben, who grasped him by the collar and gave him a fresh start on his course. In another moment there was another mix-up with a dozen participants, while Ben and Gilbert endeavored to withdraw to safer quarters.

"I hope we are in no danger of striking on the rocks," remarked the Southerner. "It wouldn't be pleasant to be wrecked out here."

"There are no rocks anywhere around," came in Larry's voice, and both turned, to behold the

young sailor approaching, wet to the skin. "I just came from the deck. I can tell you it's a grand sight. The whole sea is almost as white as whipped cream."

"You be careful or you'll go overboard," returned Ben, by way of caution.

"Oh, I'm used to this sort of thing, you know," was the quick reply. "Jack Biddle came up with me. He said the storm made him feel more like himself than anything that had happened since we left home."

So far there had been but little lightning and thunder, but now the fury of the elements increased, and there came a crash that caused many a heart to jump with fright. "Talk about cannonading," remarked Gilbert, "it couldn't hold a candle to this noise. Phew! There she goes again!" he added, as a vivid flash lit up the semi-dark apartment. He was about to say more, but the roar of the thunder drowned out every other sound.

"Larry, where are you?" It was the voice of Jack Biddle. "Larry Russell!"

"Here I am, Jack," answered the young sailor, coming forward. "What is wanted?"

"I was afraid you had been lost overboard," returned the old sailor. "I couldn't find you on deck."

"I am safe enough, Jack. The storm seems to be getting worse."

"So it is, and we'll be lucky if we ain't thrown on our beam ends. Phew, how hot it is down here!"

"I'm going on deck again. Will you come?"

"In a few minutes — just as soon as I get my wind. But be careful, lad. You don't want to go overboard — as you did on that trip you were tellin' me about."

"No fear — I've got my eyes too wide open," was the reply, and Larry ran off and up the stairs to what had once been the upper saloon of the steamer. Here he paused to look through the glass of a small window which had been left when the steamer was fitted up as an army transport.

As Larry gazed out, a brilliant and lasting flash of lightning lit up the whole firmament, making the scene on the outer deck almost as bright as day.

"Goodness gracious!" burst from the youth's lips. A sight had met his gaze that held him

almost spellbound. Out on the deck, close to the rail, two men were fighting. The men were Quartermaster Yarrow and Andy Possy.

"They'll both go overboard," thought the boy. "Hi! stop that!" he cried, and ran out toward the pair. "This is no place to quarrel."

The men did not hear him, and it is doubtful if they would have paid any attention if they had. Both were in a perfect rage, and as Larry came closer Yarrow caught Possy by the throat and ran him up against the rail.

"Now we'll settle matters," the youth heard the petty officer ejaculate. "You are the cause of all of our troubles."

"Let—let up!" came from Possy, in a choked voice. "Le—let up!"

"I will not, Possy, until you promise to go before General Kenwood and take that affair entirely on your own shoulders. I am not going to stand a court-martialling when we get to Manila."

"I won't do it!" screamed Andy Possy, and with a dexterous twist he tore himself loose and started to run. But Yarrow caught him a second time, and both fell up against the cabin as the transport rolled to port.

"Hold on for your lives!" came from Larry, as he clung to an iron brace which was handy. "Hold hard!" And as another plunge of the vessel threw Yarrow against him he caught the quartermaster by the arm. But the grip did not hold, and Yarrow slipped away in the darkness. In the meantime Possy had disappeared.

"He has gone overboard!" thought the youth, and peered over into the black waters. Seeing nothing, he waited for the next flash of lightning, but it revealed nothing.

"Larry, we had better go in." It was Jack Biddle's voice, and the youth turned to see the tar just behind him.

"Did you see that, Jack?"

"That? What?"

"The fight between Yarrow and Possy. Possy has disappeared; I think he went overboard."

"What! And where is the quartermaster?"

"There he goes below."

"And you are certain Possy went over the side?"

"He disappeared somewhere, and he didn't go below, either. Yes, we had better go down. This is the worst blow I've seen yet."

They repaired to their quarters, to find Yarrow sitting in a corner, watching those around him from the corners of his keen black eyes.

"I've a good mind to question him about Possy," said Jack Biddle, but Larry hauled him back.

"No — wait awhile; perhaps Possy will turn up, after all," said the boy.

They kept a strict watch, and thus the remainder of the night wore away. With the coming of daylight the storm abated, and by ten o'clock the sun was shining as brightly as ever. But the sea was "choppy," and did not calm down until twenty-four hours later.

"If Possy is around, he ought to turn up at mess-call," remarked Biddle. But the sailor was gone, and all on board were forced to believe that he had lost his life in the hurricane. Immediately after breakfast, Biddle called Yarrow aside.

"You were fighting with Possy last night," he began.

"It's false!" roared the quartermaster. "He attacked me, and I defended myself." He clenched his fists. "Don't say I'm responsible for his loss. I've got troubles enough already without that."

"But he wouldn't have gone overboard if you two hadn't fought," insisted Larry, who was present.

"See here, you keep your mouth shut!" answered the disgraced one, in a passion. "He attacked me, and I defended myself. If he fell overboard, it was afterward."

There was a painful pause, and Jack Biddle looked from Larry to the quartermaster. "I reckon I'll report, anyhow," said the old tar, and lost no time in doing so. Later on, General Kenwood held an examination, and the upshot of the matter was that Quartermaster Yarrow was deprived of his liberty and consigned to the brig, "for fighting and for disgraceful conduct generally," as the report had it. It may be as well to add here that Andy Possy was never heard of again, and probably was drowned.

"I am glad Yarrow has been placed in close confinement," said Larry. "He is a thoroughly bad man, and every time he came near me he gave me the creeps. Perhaps he didn't help Possy overboard, but I guess he was equal to it."

"Such men are better out of the service than in," answered Ben. "It is a great pity Uncle Sam is hampered with them."

The course of the transport was now southeast, for the southern point of the island of Ceylon. Day after day sped by without special incident, and soldiers and sailors hardly knew how to put in their time, and many were the games and other amusements played and devised. Among other things the soldiers proceeded to publish a daily paper, called the *Haversack*, in which all sorts of personal articles were inserted, much to everybody's amusement. This paper was printed on a typewriter belonging to the quartermaster's department and then duplicated on a patented copying machine. Among the sailors, yarn spinning went on constantly.

"If I remember rightly, Ceylon is noted for its teas," remarked Gilbert, when they were approaching that island. "I should like to see a tea plantation and watch them gather the crop and prepare it for the market."

"All of the islands around here are noted for something," put in Ben. "After we pass Ceylon we'll steer directly for Sumatra, where they grow the celebrated Sumatra tobacco, — used for cigar wrappers. Just south of that is Java, and I guess there isn't anybody who hasn't heard of Java coffee."

"Yes, and then there are all the spice islands," broke in Larry. "And the Philippines, celebrated for their Manila hemp, used in rope and paper making, — and their rice and sugar plantations."

"I met a man in New York who said the Philippines were rich in minerals," said the young Southerner. "As soon as this difficulty out here is settled, he is coming out to locate some mines and start a mining company. I should like to uncover a gold mine myself."

"I don't believe you'll find much gold, Gilbert," answered Ben. "But there may be other minerals — copper and the like — and maybe silver. One thing is certain, the islands are a rich possession, both from an agricultural and a mining standpoint. But nothing can be done until the rebels are subdued and a good government is established."

"And until the natives are taught how to work," finished Larry. "If those in the interior are as savage as I've heard, they certainly know little of the use of a shovel and a spade, or a saw and a hammer, and those are the tools that count, when it comes to real civilization."

CHAPTER XIV

THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS AND GENERAL AGUINALDO

On the second day after the conversation just recorded, Point de Galle, the most southerly extremity of Ceylon, was passed on the port bow. The weather was extremely clear, and those possessing glasses could make out the distant mountains quite plainly. The course was now due east, for the Strait of Malacca, which separates the island of Sumatra from the Malay Peninsula.

"Now we are coming to the Dutch East Indies," remarked Gilbert. "You know Sumatra, Borneo, Java, and the other little islands all belong to Holland."

"But the little island of Singapore doesn't belong to Holland," answered Ben. "That is English. I wonder if we shall stop at the capital. I'd like to take another walk out into the country — as we did at Malta."

"And get eaten up by a tiger," said Larry. "I was reading that about three hundred natives are carried off annually by these fierce beasts, which overrun all the woods behind the city."

"If that's the case, no shore-going for me," said Gilbert. "I came out to fight Filipinos, not tigers. By the way, I wonder if there are any wild animals in the Philippines?"

"Not any to speak of," answered Larry. "You'll find some wild boars and a sort of buffalo, and also a species of goats, and an animal called a wildcat. But there are plenty of monkeys, so I've been told, and rabbits and small game. And then, as everywhere around here, you'll find the birds without number, while the whole seacoast is full of native oysters, which are not very good, and turtles."

"Sure, an' somewan told me th' counthry was full av lions and tigers an' elephants!" burst in Dan Casey, who stood by, listening to what was said. "It was mesilf as was thinkin' thim animals would hurt us tin times more than the ribils!" And the Irish volunteer drew a long sigh of relief.

"The lions and elephants all swam over to India, Dan," answered Gilbert, gravely. "But don't

worry, my boy," he went on, with a twinkle in his eye, "you'll have adventures enough. Do you know why the big animals left?"

"Sure, sergeant, an' how would I, knowin' nothin' about the islands at all?"

"Well, they left on account of the snakes. The islands are overrun with reptiles, you know — they've got about all that St. Patrick chased out of Ireland."

"Great snakes! An' is that thrue, sergeant?"

"Certainly, and the snakes are great, some as big around as your body and twenty to thirty feet long."

"Sure, an' that's worse nor tigers an' lions, be-dad! I don't want any snakes in mine!" And Dan Casey went off shaking his head dubiously. It was some time before he discovered that Gilbert had been poking fun at him, although snakes of fair size can be found throughout the Philippines, especially in the island of Mindanao, to the southward.

The run through the Strait of Malacca to Singapore was an interesting one, for at many points the transport steamed so close to shore that the native villages and the country in general could

be seen. On all sides were immense forests of teak and other woods, while from a distance came the sweet smell of spices. Delia was passed on the starboard, and Malacca on the port, and one cloudy afternoon they swept into the roadstead harbor of Singapore and came to anchor.

"Hurrah! This looks as if we were going ashore once more!" cried Larry; but the stop proved a short one, — just long enough to take on a little fresh water and some ice, and to allow the commander to get some despatches which awaited him.

"It's too bad we can't see the city," said Ben, who stood at the rail, gazing at the numerous shipping, for Singapore is a great centre of trade. Beyond the immense wharves could be seen the wide and well-kept streets of the town, with its jumble of European and Oriental architecture.

General Kenwood's orders were probably urgent, for no sooner had he perused them than the captain of the transport was ordered to up anchor and proceed with all possible speed, and the following day found the ship on its way northeastward, through the South China Sea. There now remained a clear run of about fifteen hundred miles to Manila.

Several English newspapers had been brought on board at Singapore, and these were eagerly perused for news. From them it was learned that the situation in and around Manila remained about the same, but that the natives appeared to be getting ready to resist American authority. "I think we are going to jump right into fighting when we get there," remarked Ben, and the young lieutenant's prediction proved very nearly true.

So far the health of all on board had been good, but with the continued hot weather several were stricken with a low fever — "equator fever," as the surgeons in charge called it, for it was caught while the transport was but a few miles north of the equator. Fortunately the medical attendance on board was the best, and although a few suffered for a long time, not one of the cases was fatal.

"I tell you, it fries the fat right out of a chap," said Mark Olney one day to Larry. "I never thought it could get so hot." Mark was lying in the shade, stripped to the waist and with a wet towel tied around his head, which pained him considerably.

"You want to be careful about exposing your-

self," answered Larry. "And you want to be careful about what you eat and drink, too. An overloaded stomach can knock a fellow out as quickly as anything."

"I'm trying to be careful, Larry. But my head spins like a top. I wish I had a real cold drink of ice-water."

"That won't do you half as much good as a drink of strong lemonade, Mark. Just wait till I make it for you." Larry was as good as his word, and the suffering boy declared that nothing had ever tasted better. But on the day following Mark had to go to the sick bay, and he did not reappear until long after Manila was reached.

Since coming from Cuba, Ben had had scant opportunities of studying up about the Philippines, but now, as a second lieutenant of his company, he felt that he ought to learn all he possibly could about the islands. "Then, if one of the men question me, I won't stand and stare at him like a block of wood," he reasoned.

In his naturally agreeable way he had made a friend of the first mate of the transport, and through this officer gained access to the small library which the latter possessed. Among the volumes was one

on the islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans, which included several chapters on the Philippines and one chapter in particular on Manila, Ilo Ilo, Sual, and Zębu, the principal cities, seaports which the Spanish government had kept open for trade with foreign countries, — all other seaports being accessible for local traffic only.

From this book Ben learned several things which Larry already knew — that the islands, great and small, numbered about twelve hundred and had an area of one hundred and fifty thousand square miles, and a population of between four and five millions. Luzon, upon which Manila was located, was the largest island, with an area of fifty-one thousand three hundred square miles, while to the southward was Mindanao, about half as large. Between these two lay Samar, Mindoro, Panay, Leyte, and hundreds of other islands of lesser importance, some of which have never yet been visited by white men.

"It's a great country," he said, in talking the matter over with Gilbert. "Even if we subdue those rebels, I think we shall have our hands full governing it."

"Uncle Sam will have to establish a permanent garrison in each of the principal cities," returned

the young Southerner. "That is what the English do, you know."

"I know it. But these islands are so large it will take a good many soldiers to keep the peace, to my way of thinking."

"It all depends on how the natives are governed, Ben. If we do the fair thing by them, I don't think they'll be unruly very long, — that is, after we give them a taste of the benefits of real civilization. By the way, how big is Manila?"

"It has a population of about two hundred and fifty thousand, mostly natives and Chinamen. But I understand that since this trouble the population has greatly increased, many natives coming in to be protected by our government in case of another outbreak by the forces under General Aguinaldo."

"Then it seems to me we'll have our hands full holding the city, as we have less than fifteen thousand available men, — I mean in case there is an uprising within as well as without."

"I don't believe these rebels can whip us, Gilbert. General Aguinaldo can't handle them skilfully enough."

"I don't know about that. General Aguinaldo is not such a fool as most people think. I've been talk-

ing to Captain Frayling about him. Frayling says he is well educated and understands military tactics as well as any graduate from West Point. Those who pick him up for an ignorant native will find themselves mistaken in the man."

"I know he is a Tagal, and that is about all I do know of him."

"Yes, he is a Tagal, one of the race that inhabits the northern portion of the island of Luzon, but he looks much like a Spaniard. He has been a soldier for ten or twelve years, and they say he is as good a shot as any officer or man under him."

"I thought he kept out of the line of battle, Gilbert."

"He may now, but he didn't during the time that the Tagals were fighting the Spaniards. He and all his generals were as brave as they were daring. Captain Frayling said some of these fellows would remain on the firing line long after they ought to have been carried to the hospital. They have fought for so many years among themselves that a small wound doesn't seem to affect them. I'll tell you, I don't think we have any easy time ahead," concluded Gilbert.

CHAPTER XV

IN WHICH LARRY JOINS THE "OLYMPIA" ONCE MORE

"LAND! land! The Philippines at last!"

Such was the cry which rang throughout the transport one hot afternoon late in January, bringing soldiers, sailors, and everybody else to the deck in a hurry. Yes, land was there, as yet a mere speck on the horizon, dead ahead. On all other sides was to be seen nothing but the deep-rolling China Sea.

"Hurrah! it won't be long before we set foot on land now!" exclaimed Ben, his face beaming. "I wonder what part of the Philippines that is."

"We were sailing directly for the entrance of Manila Bay," replied Larry. "The captain says the land we have sighted is just north of the entrance. Before long you'll see the entrance itself, with Corregidor Island and one or two small bits of land lying about in the middle. I guess we may as well get ready to pack our ditty boxes and knapsacks, eh?"

Soon the land began to loom up more plainly, and they could see the low-lying hills, covered with brush and other tropical growths. "Looks about like the other places down here, doesn't it?" remarked Gilbert.

"You didn't expect to see something entirely different, did you?" rejoined Ben. "See, we are heading for yonder entrance to the bay. Is that Corregidor Island, Larry?"

"It is," was the young sailor's reply. "My, what a difference between now and when I was on board the *Olympia*, and we crept in under cover of the darkness, expecting each instant to be blown up by some sunken mine."

"Hurrah!" came suddenly from a distance, and looking, all those on deck saw a party of American soldiers standing on the shore of Corregidor, one with an American flag, which he was waving lustily. A rousing cheer went up in return. "We've found friends at last in this foreign-like quarter," was Gilbert's comment, while Ben's heart beat faster than ever.

The Bay of Manila is a large one, and Manila itself is located twenty-nine miles from the entrance on the northeast shore. By the time Corregidor

had been passed it was dark, and anchor was dropped on the west side of the channel.

"It's too bad we can't land at once," grumbled Ben. "I wonder if there's been any fighting to-day."

The others wondered too, but nobody could answer the question. With the end of that long trip so near, nobody felt like sleeping, and almost all sat up for the greater part of the warm night, and discussed the situation, speculating upon what would be their first duty on landing.

Ben sought out Larry. "I suppose we've got to separate soon," he said soberly. "It's too bad we can't be together, but duty is duty, and we will have to make the best of it."

"I'll write to you as often as I can get the chance, Ben, and you must do the same," answered the young sailor, and, as a curious lump came up into his throat, he caught his elder brother's hand in the darkness, and gave it a tight squeeze. Now that parting was so near at hand each felt how dear the other was to him.

The only man on the transport who felt thoroughly miserable was Quartermaster Yarrow. He knew that in a few hours more he would be handed over to the naval authorities. "And what will they

do with me then?" was his constant thought. He was very bitter at Jack Biddle and Larry, and vowed that he would "square matters" with both, did the opportunity ever present itself.

It was the *Monadnock* which steamed up alongside of the transport at daylight on the morning following. She was a coast defence monitor of about four thousand tons' displacement, and had been sent to the Philippines some time previous. Presently her officers came on board, followed by several jackies, the latter to help the sailors remove their effects.

"We are to join our various ships at once," said Larry, rushing up to Ben shortly afterward. "Good-by, and good luck to you, and be sure to write," and a quarter of an hour later the young sailor was off, bound for the *Olympia*, in company with Jack Biddle, while Mark Olney went along, bound for the *Concord*, with all the others, who were going to one or another of the Asiatic Squadron. The soldiers gave them a rousing cheer, which was returned with interest.

"It makes me feel almost like home," said Larry, as they steamed within sight of the flagship, which lay well out in the harbor of Manila. "Here is just

where I left the dear old ship when I sailed on board the *McCulloch* for Hong Kong. I hope all my old friends are aboard."

"Larry Russell! Hooray!" The cry came from the gun-deck of the *Olympia*, and, looking forward, the youth saw a bronzed face that made his heart jump with gladness.

"Luke Striker!" he called back. "Aren't you glad to see me? I'm awfully glad to see you."

"Glad ain't no name, lad. You air a sight for sore eyes, thet's wot ye air! Come on board an' git hugged to death!" And when Larry did come on board the old gunner nearly squeezed his hand to a jelly. Barrow, Castleton, and the others were also delighted to meet him once more, and for a while the scene was a jolly one. Jack Biddle was, of course, speedily introduced, and he and Striker soon became warm friends. Later on it was found that Biddle was to have charge of the gun next to that commanded by Luke Striker, — for Luke, it must be remembered, was now a gun-captain, — so the friends would be close together during a fight, should any come.

"We've kept mighty quiet since the fall of Manila," said Luke, after all had settled down. "But

we are not calculating to keep quiet much longer. Those rebels are grumbling like thunder, and the feeling in the city is like a barrel o' gunpowder that only wants a match struck to set it off."

"But about the fall of the city, did you take any part in that?" asked Larry.

"To be sure we did, my lad, — this old gun of mine was one of the first to begin the firing. We lay off Fort San Antonio and gave it to the Spaniards for all we knew how."

"And what did they do — fire in return?"

"They were too scared to do anything. We started in at half-past nine, and by eleven o'clock the Spanish flag came down on the run, and the city was ours."

"It must have been exciting even so, Luke."

"So it was — but nothing to that battle in which you fought, lad; that was something I'll never forget," concluded Luke Striker, emphatically.

Larry wanted to know all the news, and it was soon given to him. The harbor seemed to be full of ships of war, and the old Yankee tar pointed out one and another of them to both the boy and Biddle and told what they were and when they had arrived.

"Uncle Sam is bound to have enough ships on hand," said Larry. "We must have more here now than Sampson had in Cuban waters."

"Hardly, lad. But we've got a good many more than we had when we came to whip Montojo."

"And what have they done with Montojo's men and with the Spanish soldiers who surrendered?"

"They are being shipped back to Spain jest as fast as it kin be done. But it's a big job an' takes time. Now tell me all about yourself, and then tell me about that big brother o' yours who is a soldier and that other one who fit Cervera down off Santiago. Say, but I would like to have been in that running fight, eh?" and Luke Striker bobbed his head enthusiastically. At Manila the men talked continually of our naval operations in Cuban waters, while at home the main topic of conversation was Dewey's wonderful victory at Manila.

It will be remembered that during his former service on the flagship Larry had had no opportunity of going ashore. As the city was now under American control, he was anxious to see what the place looked like, and at the first chance he asked

for and obtained permission to join a party which was to have forty-eight hours' furlough. Luke Striker accompanied him.

"Take good care of yourselves," shouted Jack Biddle after them. The gunner would have liked to join the pair, but could not be spared.

"We'll try to," cried back Larry from the row-boat in which they had taken passage. "I don't expect trouble just yet, but if it comes, you hold the *Olympia* in readiness for it."

"Right you are, lad, — we'll give it to those rebels so hot they won't know where they stand," answered Biddle.

"You men keep out of trouble," was the parting word from the officer of the deck. "At present all is quiet in the town, and if there is to be any fighting, we don't want our side to start it."

"We'll remember, sir," answered the sailor in charge of the party. "But we are not to take any insults, are we?"

"No. But don't use any firearms unless it becomes absolutely necessary. Those rebels are just waiting for us to do some shooting. Then they'll draw on a regular battle, and send word to Washington that we are trying to butcher them."

Soon the small boat was on its way, leaping over the waves of Manila Bay as if it were a thing of life. The city was nearly a mile away, and those at the oars were bound to make their run ashore as long as possible.

"I hope Ben has landed and that I can find him," said Larry on the way. He determined to start on a hunt for his brother as soon as the dock was gained, but never dreamed of the thrilling adventure into which that search was to lead him.

CHAPTER XVI

LIFE IN THE CITY OF MANILA

The city of Manila is divided into two parts by the river Pasig, a good sized stream which is navigable for a distance of ten or twelve miles. To the south of the river is the old portion of the town, at which were formerly located the Spanish forts and government buildings, all still standing, but now occupied by our own officers, civic officials, and soldiers. This portion of the city contains a beautiful cathedral, over a dozen churches, and several convents. It is enclosed by an ancient rampart, beyond which is a beautiful driveway and public park. On the harbor side are long wharves, covered with a ramshackle set of buildings which give the newcomer no idea of the better appearance of the town beyond. All the streets in old Manila are regular, broad, and well kept, but business in this portion is a thing of the past.

To the north of the Pasig lie the several districts

of Tondo, Binondo, Santa Cruz, Quiapo, and St. Miguel. Tondo is located to the north, directly upon the harbor, and Binondo, Santa Cruz, and the others to the eastward, but still bordering upon the upper bank of the winding Pasig.

The great shopping centre is in the Binondo district, and this also contains hundreds of fine residences, belonging to the native merchants. Here the streets are narrow, irregular, and many of them still unpaved, and the territory is also cut up by several small canals. Down in the business centre the shops are huddled closely together, and as much of the trading is done on the sidewalk, the foot passenger, if he is in a hurry, must take to the street.

Strange as it may seem, there are fully as many foreigners in business in Manila as there are both natives and Spaniards. Of the foreigners the greater portion are Chinamen, who keep restaurants and stores for the sale of all sorts of commodities. There is also a good sprinkling of Englishmen and Germans, the majority of whom are engaged in the foreign trade. That my readers may not think that Manila is far behind the times let me add that there are both electric lights and

telephones there, as well as several street-car lines Carts and farm wagons that come into the city are usually drawn by water buffaloes, but for carriages and horseback riding the native ponies are used.

Many of the soldiers arriving on the transports had been landed at Cavité and placed in temporary camps along the shore from the arsenal to the walls of the city, but Ben's command was taken directly into Manila and assigned to a barrack in the very heart of the place. The landing was made in *cascoes* without difficulty, and after a rather long wait on a dock piled high with native lumber, — ebony, iron-wood, grenadilla, mahogany, and the like, — the regiment moved to the barracks through several streets which were crowded with a population representing a dozen nationalities. But the Tagals were in the majority, and these are the people that are commonly known as the Filipinos. They are of Malay blood, sometimes mixed with Spanish, are of a reddish brown color, with high cheek bones and broad lips, and all have thick, straight, black hair. None of them are of great height, and a six-foot Tagal is almost unknown.

The barracks was almost as much of a curiosity to the young lieutenant as the people. It was a

two-storied affair, built in the form of a hollow square, with a small parade ground of hot sand in the centre. In front was a small veranda, and at the ends the upper story overtopped the lower by several feet. There were numerous windows, but no window glass, some of the openings being protected by iron bars and others having sash frames filled with transparent sea-shells, which let in as much light as our ordinary ground glass windows. A certain kind of sea-shell, broad and flat, is used for this purpose all over the Philippines.

"They don't build any of their houses very high," remarked Ben, as, after a short drill, he and Gilbert took a stroll around the city.

"I reckon they are afraid of earthquakes," answered the Southerner. "They have had some pretty severe ones here. One in 1863 threw down all the churches and other principal buildings and killed over two thousand inhabitants."

"Gracious, then I don't want to be here when an earthquake comes, Gilbert."

"Nor I. But I reckon a native uprising here would prove about as disastrous. Do you notice how our soldiers are doing police duty on every corner?"

"I saw two guards on the corner we just passed.

I wonder how they get along with those who can't speak English."

"Make them understand by signs, I suppose, — or call in an interpreter. But some of them must understand a little English by this time. Hullo, look at that sign."

The sign to which Gilbert referred was one on heavy brown paper, painted in red, blue, and yellow, and invited all Americans to come and see the wonderful cock fight at a certain sporting resort that afternoon. Price of admission was, for Americans, "One silver dollar, which give to that one the best of all of the seats at a choice."

"His English is a bit mixed, but the advertiser makes himself understood," commented Gilbert. "Cock fighting is the national sport here, just as bull fighting is in Spain. "Do you want to go, Ben?"

"No; such cruel, senseless sport has no fascination for me. What fun can there be in seeing one chicken trying to kill another?"

"And yet they say these people go wild over the sport."

"Then it shows they need education, Gilbert; that is all I've got to say."

A little further on they came to a restaurant conducted by several natives. Outside hung a bill of fare, printed in both English and Spanish. Delicious fish chowder was put down at twenty-five cents per bowl, and they determined to go in and try the dish, as much for the novelty as anything else. Soon they were seated at a long, low table covered with a tablecloth of fancy pattern, and a short, fat Tagal came forward to wait upon them.

"Do you speak English?" asked Ben, with a smile.

"Yes, mistair, spak verra good Englees," was the reply, and the native smiled even more broadly than had Ben.

"Good enough," put in Gilbert. "Bring us some of your fish chowder."

"Feesh chowder? Verra good, mistair. Feesh chowder all, mistair?"

"Yes."

"Verra good, mistair," and the native trotted off. Presently he returned with two large bowls of steaming chowder which was as appetizing as it was peculiar in flavor. With the chowder were served half a dozen hard rice cakes, which also tasted good to the hungry soldiers.

"Well, how do you find business?" asked Ben, when the eating was brought on.

"Only so-so, mistair. Nobody haf much money, — *Tagalos* poor, Spanish poor, soldier more poor, no money at all," and the native waved his hands and shrugged his shoulders.

"So you think our soldiers are the most poor of the lot?" laughed Gilbert.

"Verra poor — after pay day go by. Pay day verra rich, spend everyt'ing in two, tree days. Den verra poor, say 'trust me.' Me trust, nevair see de same soldier again," and the Tagal squinted his eyes suggestively. His manner was so comical that both Ben and Gilbert roared. But the native did not see the humor of the situation and walked off in ill humor, muttering to himself in his own language. Ben soon discovered that all of the Tagals, especially those who were a trifle educated, took themselves very seriously and did not understand joking at all, although they are not above what they call fun, — boisterous horse-play.

As people of all kinds were coming and going, the pair remained in the restaurant a long time, eating their chowder slowly. "We must make the best of it," remarked Ben. "I think we'll get

orders to go on the outskirts to-morrow, and that means a long time in the trenches, with only regular rations to live on."

"Well, I can't say that this looks much like war," returned the young Southerner. "Certainly these folks look peaceable enough."

"They know that our troops will stand no nonsense — the capture of the city told them that. But I'll wager the troops outside under Aguinaldo are of a different metal. For myself, I am rather anxious to get on the outskirts, just to get a taste of what we had in Cuba once more."

"I'll wager those are genuine rebels," whispered Gilbert, nodding toward half a dozen natives who had come in and seated themselves in the rear of the place. They had ordered a little to eat and a great deal to drink, and were talking cautiously and earnestly. Presently they caught sight of the Americans and one after another scowled ominously.

"They don't like it that we are here," said Ben. "I see you have about finished. Shall we go?"

"On their account? Not a bit of it. We have as much right here as they have. If they don't like our presence, let them go elsewhere," was Gilbert's warm reply.

"The *Americanos* are no good," said one of the Filipinos, in exceedingly bad English. "They canno shoot, they canno fight, — they are cowards — they haf to come to a *Tagalos* eating-house to keep from starving — bah!"

He spoke in a loud voice, evidently intending to insult the Americans. Ben and Gilbert heard his voice quite plainly, and both colored up.

"They mean us, Gilbert," whispered the young lieutenant.

"So they do," came from the sergeant's set lips. His hot Southern temper arose on the instant. "I'm going to find out what he means by his words."

"No! no! You'll only get into trouble."

"I don't care — he shan't insult us in this fashion. I'll make him eat his words — or know the reason why." And leaping to his feet, Gilbert strode over to the rebel and caught him firmly by the shoulder.

CHAPTER XVII

AN UPRISING IN THE STREETS

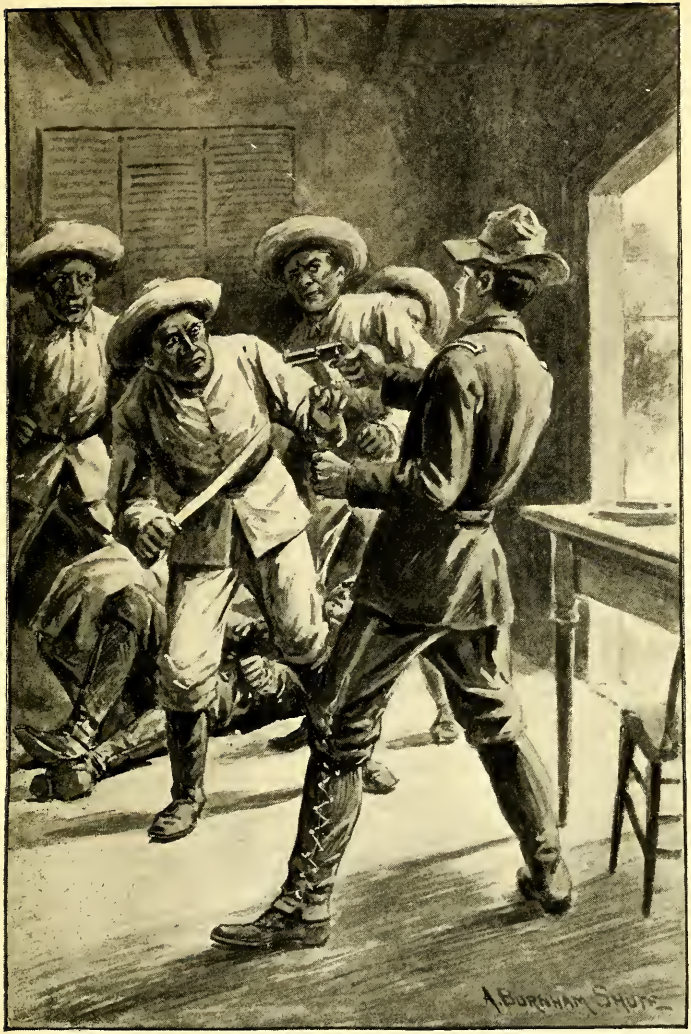
BEN fully expected to see a fight on the instant, and as Gilbert caught hold of the Filipino, he put his hand to his hip pocket and half drew his pistol, — to be ready in case of an emergency, — for he had learned the lesson of war times, that it is often advisable to "shoot first and talk afterward."

The rebel had seen Gilbert advance, and when the young Southerner caught him by the shoulder he did not flinch, although his hollow face became a trifle more sober than it had been while he was uttering his tirade.

"You meant those words for us, didn't you?" asked Gilbert, in cool, clean-cut tones.

"I was speaking of all *Americanos*," growled the Filipino. And then he added some words in his native tongue, to the effect that Gilbert should let go of him, or he would be sorry for it.

"You meant us in particular, you rascal! Take



"Drop it or I'll fire." — *Page* 161.

that!" And raising his hand, the young Southerner threw the Tagal from his bench flat on his back on the floor.

At once the Filipinos, who were five in number, set up a cry of defiance, and before the keepers of the restaurant could interfere they hurled themselves upon Gilbert, bearing him to the floor, close to where their companion lay.

"Teach the *Americano* a lesson!" burst from one of the number. "Use no pistols, but pound them well." And they started in to hammer Gilbert at will, while one of them, evidently the most savage of the lot, drew a *bolo* — a long knife used in the cane fields. At the same time the restaurant proprietors called upon them to behave themselves, but to this plea they paid no attention.

Ben saw it all, and when Gilbert went down the heart of the young lieutenant seemed to leap into his throat. But he did not lose his presence of mind, and as quick as a flash he brought the pistol into view, and aimed it at the head of the rascal with the knife.

"Drop it!" he called out. "Drop it, or I'll fire!"

It is doubtful if the Tagal understood the words,

since thus far he had not said a word in English, but he understood that the pistol barrel was in a direct line with his head, and that the aim of the young American was a true one. Startled at the sudden turn of affairs, he jerked the *bolo* behind him, out of sight, and ran for a side window of the restaurant, out of which he tumbled in a most ungraceful fashion.

By this time Gilbert was trying to get up. But with one Filipino on his chest and another on his legs this was not so easy. "Let up, you villains!" he gasped. "Let up, or it will be the worse for you!"

"Yes, let up!" repeated the young lieutenant. As he spoke he pushed his weapon under the nose of the fellow on Gilbert's chest. There was a yell of fright, and the Tagal fell back upon his companion, and both rolled on the floor.

But now the other two, including the rascal who had started all of the trouble, ran up to Ben, one in front and one behind, and while Gilbert was scrambling up, the young lieutenant was thrown down, his pistol falling under the table and going off accidentally, hitting one of the Tagals in the thigh.

A scream of pain followed the report, and the

smoke made it look as though a regular skirmish was taking place in the restaurant. In the meantime the other customers who had been present had fled, among them a German, who ran around the corner to notify the military command stationed there that an uprising was in progress.

Ben had gone down, but he was not subdued, and aiming a side blow with his right fist, he sent one of the Tagals staggering back against a wall. Then the other closed in, and American and Filipino rolled over and over, in the direction of the street entrance. By this time a crowd began to collect, brought to the spot by the pistol shot, and soon the entire street was blockaded.

"The natives are rising!" was the cry from the Americans. "Shoot them down! Make them keep quiet and get indoors!"

"The *Americanos* are going to butcher us all!" came from the Filipinos. "Fight, or fly for your lives!"

Each instant the cries became louder and the crowd more dense, until it looked as if the whole front of the restaurant and the buildings adjoining would be crushed in. Opposite to the eating-house was the store of a Chinese merchant. As

soon as the trouble started, the Celestial brought forth his heavy wooden shutters, put them up and barred them, and then disappeared from view into his cellar, taking his money and valuables with him.

Ben and his assailant and Gilbert all reached the doorway of the restaurant at the same time. In a twinkling the young Southerner caught the Tagal and threw him back among his fellows. Then another pistol shot rang out, and Ben felt a bullet whistle uncomfortably close to his ear.

"Matters are getting warm — hadn't we better run for it now?" he said.

"We can't run — we are hemmed in, Ben. Look!"

As Gilbert finished he pointed out to where a dozen Filipinos were advancing, two with knives, one with a pistol, and the others with sticks and stones. Behind the dozen was a miscellaneous mob of all nationalities.

"We must fight our way out, Gilbert," came from the young lieutenant. "Hurry up, or it will be too late!"

Even while Ben was talking another pistol shot rang through the air. He saw his chum stagger, but only for an instant.

"You are hit, Gilbert?"

"Only a scratch in the shoulder. Come on!"

They started to slip past the restaurant door, and thus avoid those who were hurrying toward them from the roadway. But with a yell of rage the dozen came on, and soon they were surrounded, and all sorts of articles, sticks, stones, old bottles, and the like, were hurled at them. One bottle hit Ben in the chin, drawing blood.

But now an unexpected cry rang out, a cry that filled Ben with amazement. "*Olympia* boys to the rescue! Don't hang back! Give the niggers what they deserve!" And up came the eight sailors who had obtained a forty-eight hours' furlough that very morning, and with them Larry and Luke Striker.

"Here come some of our sailors! They are going to help us!" ejaculated Gilbert. "This way, fellows, if you would fight for Uncle Sam!" he called out.

"We're coming!" came back from Striker, and soon the tall Yankee was fighting his way to the pair's side, hurling the Filipinos to the right and the left as he advanced.

"Ben!" the call came from Larry, and the young lieutenant looked up to see his brother bearing down upon him. "What does this mean?"

"It means that we have got into a mess and must get out of it here," panted the young lieutenant. "Look out, the Filipinos will murder you if they get the chance."

There was no time to say more — indeed, the yelling was now so great that scarcely anybody could make himself understood. Larry sprang to his brother's side, and both began to fight their way in the direction Gilbert, Striker, and several sailors had pursued. Many blows were taken and delivered, and again Ben went down, hit in the back of the head. Larry bent over him, to learn that his brother was unconscious.

"Let him alone," he cried fiercely to a Filipino who was about to stamp upon Ben, and as the rascal raised his foot, Larry caught it and gave a jerk, and down went the Tagal with a thump on the pavement. Before he could rise, the young sailor had his brother up in his arms and over his shoulder and was running as rapidly as the weight of his burden would permit.

Matters were looking very serious all around, when the little uprising subsided as quickly as it had gathered. The German who had given the alarm to the authorities had caused a Minnesota

company of volunteers to be called out, and they came down the highway on the double quick, with muskets loaded and bayonets fixed.

"Into your homes, every one of you!" shouted the captain in command. "Drop your weapons or you will be shot down!" And then a volley rang out, shot into the air, and, badly demoralized, the rioters, for they can be termed nothing else, sped in all directions, and the street was cleared in a twinkle.

The company had come up behind the Filipinos, and consequently the natives were at first driven upon Larry and the others. For a moment it looked as if the young sailor would be upset in the mêlée, but he managed to keep his feet, and in a minute more the danger was past, and then Gilbert and Striker joined him.

"Is Ben badly hurt?" questioned Gilbert, in deep concern, for in a way he counted himself largely responsible for what had occurred.

"I don't believe so—still there is no telling," was Larry's slow reply. "I wonder where we can get some water?"

"Let us ask the soldiers," suggested Striker.

"No, don't do that," put in Gilbert, hastily.

"They'll want to know all about the trouble and they may place us under arrest. You see we were in it from the start," he added.

"Then let us take him down one of the side streets," returned Larry. "I think if we bathe him he'll come around and be all right."

All three took up the form of the young lieutenant and hurried along a street which Gilbert indicated. In a few minutes the scene of the encounter had been left some distance behind, and they slackened their pace.

"Here is an open warehouse," said Luke Striker. "You can lay him here, Larry. There is water just beyond, and I'll run down and see if I can't get some," and the Yankee tar started for one of the canals running into the Pasig.

"Oh, my head!" The mutter came from Ben, and before Striker returned he opened his eyes and tried to sit up. The old Yankee brought with him some water in a tin can he had picked up, and this revived the young lieutenant still more.

"That was an adventure and no mistake," said Gilbert, as he related his tale to the others. "I never thought it was going to turn out like that when we went in to get the fish chowder."

"We must be more careful in the future," answered Ben, as he rubbed the lump that had raised behind his left ear. "These Filipinos mean to fight, if once they get the chance."

"Oh, they are treacherous as can be," burst out Striker. "Why, only last week two of our soldiers were found in the trenches, dead, an' stripped of all their valuables. Those Tagals did that, no doubt on it."

It was fully an hour before they left the warehouse, and by that time quietness had been restored and the company of infantry was returning to its quarters. But on every corner in the neighborhood the guard were doubled, and the shopkeepers were ordered to keep closed up for the remainder of the day. What had become of those who had fought with Ben and Gilbert there was no telling.

"I'm out my pistol," said the young lieutenant. "But never mind, I have another, and I'm thankful that my head wasn't broken."

"I'll buy you a new pistol, Ben," said Gilbert. "I'm responsible for the loss of that other," and then in the darkness he squeezed his chum's arm, and that squeeze meant a good deal.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOMETHING ABOUT MAJOR-GENERAL OTIS AND HIS COMMAND

On the following day Ben and his comrades were taken out for a review by Major-General Otis, now in command, and for a parade through the main street of old Manila. The weather was exceedingly hot, but by eleven o'clock the exercises were over and the soldier boys were allowed to do as they pleased until sundown.

"I've found out one thing since I've been here," remarked Gilbert, as he and the young lieutenant and Larry took a stroll together. "The day in Manila usually comes to an end at noon. In the afternoon everything is dead and half the folks go to sleep."

"They can't keep it up like people in a cooler climate," returned Ben. "Larry, how did you sleep last night at that native boarding-house?" he went on.

"Slept very well until about five o'clock, when I was awakened by a cock fight that was going on in the back yard. The owner of the boarding-house keeps game cocks, and one of his fowls was having it out with a rooster from next door. A crowd of about a dozen natives were gathered around, and they seemed to think it was the greatest fun in the world, and they set up a roar of laughter when one of the fowls fell over and had to be carried away."

"And how were the accommodations — good?"

"Pretty fair. I had a large square room with a bare floor. The bed, an old-fashioned affair, with a braided cord bottom, stood in the centre, with a strip of Manila matting in front of it. Outside of the bed there wasn't a thing in the room but a washstand, a chair, and some wooden hooks for my clothing. Of course I had only one thin sheet, but that was more than I wanted. I told the folks to call me at six o'clock, and at that time one of the boys of the family marched straight into the room, without so much as knocking on the door. He had just got up himself. He asked me if I wanted some coffee sent up, but I told him no."

"And what did you have for breakfast?" went on Ben, who was deeply interested in native customs and was sorry he had had no more chances to study them.

"We had baked fish, a sort of mush, rice cakes, coffee, and several kinds of fruit. It wasn't much different from what I've had before, but I was quite interested in seeing them prepare the food at their open fire. I wonder if they haven't cook stoves!"

"No more stoves than they have chimneys," rejoined Gilbert. "Look around, and I'll wager you won't see a chimney. It's so hot that what little fire is needed is built outdoors."

"The house I stopped at was supposed to be very clean," went on the young sailor. "But for all that I saw lots of bugs and the like around. Some were in the dining room, but as none of the old boarders appeared to mind them, I thought it best not to say anything."

"In hot climates you are certain to find bugs, no matter where you go," said Gilbert. "That is one reason why they don't have as many soft pillows and curtains as we are used to. A species of native moth eats into everything and ruins it."

Larry's time was short, and the remainder of the day was spent in visiting all the points of interest possible. At nightfall the young sailor returned to his ship; and that was the last Ben saw of his brother for some time to come.

The next day was Saturday, February the fourth, —the day when the regiment to which Ben belonged was to be sent to the outskirts of the city, to help prevent the Filipinos who lay outside from sneaking in and looting Manila. The rebel army, it was now estimated, numbered at least twenty thousand men, and spies had brought in word that some sort of a demonstration against the American forces might be expected at any moment.

At this time, Uncle Sam's troops in the Philippines were designated as the eighth army corps. They were under the immediate command of Major-General Elwell S. Otis, who had superseded General Merritt, and were divided into two divisions, one under Major-General Thomas M. Anderson and the other under Major-General Arthur MacArthur, each division counting two brigades. The army was composed largely of regulars, but there were many volunteers from the Western

states and territories, and likewise a regiment from Tennessee and another from Pennsylvania.

Of all the generals in our army at this time, General Otis was considered to be the best fitted for our campaign in the Philippines. He was a thorough soldier, having been drilled in the best of schools — that of war itself. When the Civil War broke out he was but twenty-two years of age and just entering upon the profession of law. Casting his profession aside, he raised a military company, became attached to a New York volunteer regiment, and from that time forth became a soldier.

His first great service was at Gettysburg, where, after most desperate fighting, the regiment to which his company belonged, secured Little Round Top mountain to the Union army. Otis then became lieutenant-colonel, and as such fought in the battle of the Wilderness. Following this came the bloody contest at Spottsylvania, where the colonel of the regiment was killed, along with nearly the whole of the non-commissioned staff, and then Otis became the commander of the regiment.

From the Rapidan to the James River Otis's command fought with great credit. The young

commander was daring to the point of rashness, and was soon placed in charge of an entire brigade. Up to this time he had received no wound of importance, but in the gallant charge at Chapel House, Virginia, he was shot down, the wound proving so serious that further service during the war was out of the question.

A year after the close of the Rebellion, the young fighter joined the regular army as a lieutenant-colonel of the twenty-second regiment, and served faithfully in various positions for ten years, when he went again to the front, this time against the Indians on the Powder River, near the Yellowstone. Several engagements resulted, and finally the Indians, under Sitting Bull, surrendered.

The country was now at peace everywhere, and Otis's time was made use of by the government in serving in the recruiting service and in assisting to revise the Army Regulations. He also served as commander of the Department of the Columbia and commander of the Department of Colorado. When the war with Spain broke out he was presiding at a court-martial being held in Savannah, Georgia. Immediately after Dewey's great victory he was appointed major-general of volunteers, and, later

on, became commander of the Department of the Pacific, and Military Governor of the Philippines.

It was no light duty to organize an army for foreign service at this time. With the exception of Scott's invasion of Mexico, we had never before equipped regulars and volunteers for service thousands of miles from home, and especially for service at a point where we had no permanent base of supplies. Moreover, the knowledge that we must do this, and do it speedily, came largely in the nature of a surprise, even to the administration. We had thought to send all of our soldiers to Cuba,—possibly some to the coast of Spain,—but now we must send ten to thirty thousand men half around the world.

In this work General Otis found plenty to do. Expedition after expedition was sent off, as previously mentioned, and Manila was taken. With the fall of the city came the immense task of checking the raids of the rebels, restoring order, feeding not only our soldiers but also those natives who had been driven into the town and were starving, and in opening up the various lines of commerce and trade. In order to do the latter the Americans had to operate the general bank, the

custom house, the police, fire, and health departments, and also the postal and cable services. All was strange; the Spaniards who had been in charge hated to give up, and would grant no assistance, and rebel sympathizers who thought that Manila ought to be turned over to Aguinaldo did all they could to add to the discomfort of the Americans. Outbreaks such as I have just described were of almost daily occurrence, and there was a rumor that if Aguinaldo did not get what he wanted, he and his followers would burn the city from end to end, regardless of consequences.

Such was the situation on this never to be forgotten fourth day of February, 1899, which was to mark the beginning of a war that was to drag along for an almost indefinite period. Aguinaldo had made his last demands upon the government at Washington, and been refused the greater part of what he desired. A plan was laid to bring on a fight which was to extend to all the outskirts of Manila. At the same time word was secretly sent for the natives inside of the city to do all they could in the cause of Filipino liberty. This meant to burn down the quarters of the Americans, and shoot as many as possible of the troops.

Various accounts have been given of how the first shot came to be fired, the Filipinos declaring that they were not in the least to blame — that the Americans fired without provocation, when it was understood by both sides that the truce was still on. The following statement is, however, probably correct, as it is testified to by several military men of high standing in our army in the Philippines: —

Some distance to the eastward of the newer portion of Manila is situated the district of Santa Mesa, a collection of small houses located between several cross-roads. From Manila there is almost a straight road to this place, and beyond is a level plain, dotted here and there with bamboo huts and the various block-houses used by the Spaniards during their occupation of the islands.

Between Manila and Santa Mesa lay the camp of some troops from Nebraska, and some distance beyond were gathered a number of the rebels, occupying the block-houses just mentioned, and all of the available thickets. The insurgents were also collected on the hill of San Juan, where are located the reservoirs and waterworks of Manila.

Between the two camps lay a small village

which had been declared neutral ground. A few days before the fighting began the Filipinos swarmed into the village and took possession of it. The Americans at once ordered them to vacate, but they refused. On the day following some soldiers were sent forward to clean the village out. They advanced to the first line of houses and beheld the Filipinos coming up the street.

"Halt!" was the command given, but the rebels would not halt. "Halt!" came again. "You have no right here. You must go back, — and then we will go back."

"We won't go back!" was the answer, and a wild cry arose, and the rebels raised their guns. But the American detachment was too quick for them, and an opening volley brought down two Filipinos. Then the rebels discharged their weapons, and some of our men went down. The Filipinos who were coming up outnumbered our men four to one, and soon the Americans retreated to their camp, the enemy following them for a short distance and then retiring.

This was the spark from which a great fire was kindled. Hardly had the first shot rung out

when there came a signal from one of the enemy's block-houses, followed by a blaze of fire from a long line of intrenchments and from several field-pieces. This first onslaught was directed toward the Nebraska soldiers, but soon the firing extended to the whole line, in a grand semicircle of flame and smoke; and then the Americans knew that a great battle was on at last.

CHAPTER XIX

THE REBEL ATTACK UPON THE CITY

BEN'S regiment had gone into camp in a most picturesque spot overlooking a tiny stream that flowed into the Pasig River. On either side the stream was lined with tropical trees and brush, while some distance away from the opposite shore was a considerable plain, a small portion of which had once been a rice field and which was still under water to the depth of several inches.

The picket line of the regiment extended for a distance of half a mile up and down the stream, and where the thickets were not sufficient, rifle pits had been dug or intrenchments thrown up. The tents were placed behind a dense grove of cedar trees, so that they were comparatively safe from shot or shell.

The insurgents had thrown up a series of intrenchments on the farthest side of the rice field and along the top of a small hill rising to

the northwest. Directly on the top of the hill was a small field-piece. This had not yet been fired, but as it was known that the Filipinos were deficient in gunnery, no great harm was expected from it.

The company to which the young lieutenant belonged was well drilled in every duty of the American soldier, and as the baggage wagon, drawn by water buffaloes, accompanied the troops, the men were not long in staking out the ground, putting up their tents, and rendering themselves otherwise at home.

"Sure, an' I suppose we're booked to sthay here fer a couple of months, at least, eh, lieutenant?" remarked Dan Casey, as he brought in some palm leaves to place on the floor of the tent he and Stummer were to occupy.

"I can't say how long we'll remain, Casey — until the Filipinos stir us up, I presume."

"Maybe dem rebels ton't got packpone enough to stir us up," put in Carl Stummer. "I vos vatch von of dem fellers down py Manila, und all he do vas to eat, drink, schmoke, und make dem chickens he vos got fight. I tole you dot vos make me tired, und I vos vant to shake him up

und tell him to go to vork," and the German volunteer shook his head determinedly.

"We may catch it before we are aware, Carl. Orders have just been received to be extra careful on the picket line," answered Ben, as he turned away to consult Captain Larchmore, concerning the digging of some new intrenchment closer to the water's edge.

The soldiers of the regiment had been told that Saturday nights were usually gay ones in the city, and some grumbled that they had not been permitted to remain in Manila until the following Monday. "We can do nothing here but lie around and get sunburned," said one of the number.

Evening found Ben walking along the newly dug intrenchment. The stream beyond was not very deep, and he was thinking of looking for a place where he might ford to the opposite shore and go on a short tour of discovery, when a distant shot reached his ears. Stopping short in his walk, he raised his head and listened. The shot was followed by several others, and then came a rolling volley.

"A fight has started somewhere," he muttered.

"It seems to be a good way off. I wonder if it will extend to here, or if we'll be called out to support some other command."

Crack! bang! The reports were so unexpected that the young lieutenant had no time to seek shelter. The rebels behind the rice field had opened fire, and two bullets clipped the tree under which he was standing, while a third wounded one of the pickets in the left shoulder.

There was no need to give the alarm, for the volley aroused the whole camp. There was a rapid call to quarters, and inside of five minutes the regiment was ready for duty. Each battalion was marched to the front separately, and the formation of it was two companies wide and two deep.

With the firing of their guns the insurgents had left the cover of the brush, and were now coming on, yelling like so many demons. When the regiment reached the picket line the enemy was in the middle of the plain and ready to fire again.

"Keep cool, men," came in a low but clear voice from Captain Larchmore. And a similar caution was passed from end to end of the long line. The men had already loaded, and some wanted to fire at once, but permission was refused.

It was thought that the Filipinos were coming straight on, and so far they had done so. But when in the centre of the plain they switched off to the northwest, evidently thinking to turn the Americans' left flank, since at this point there was a small break in the latter's defences.

"Fire!" came the command, and one company after another blazed away, Ben using his pistol and aiming at a form which appeared to be leading one of the enemy's detachments. He saw the form stagger and go down, but whether the rebel was seriously hurt or not he could not tell.

The volley from the Americans filled the wood by the stream full of smoke, and as it was already dark, but little could be seen during several minutes that followed. But the colonel of the regiment did not lose any time in thinking.

"You will double-quick your command to the left," he said to the major of the senior battalion, and soon the first four companies were moving to the defenceless spot just mentioned. It was a bit of rough ground, full of tufts of rank grass and boggy holes, and the men had to pick their way with caution.

Ben's company occupied an open space between

two solitary palms, with some brush to the rear of them. Hardly had they wheeled into position when the order came to fire at will, and crack! crack! went the Springfield rifles, spitting out their fire spitefully, and causing fully a dozen Filipinos to go down. Then came rapid firing from the other side, but the rebel aim was high, and but little damage was done in the ranks of those who were battling for the honor of Old Glory.

"Sure, an' we're in it at last!" shouted Dan Casey. "Take that, ye haythin nager!" And he pulled his trigger on a wild-looking Filipino and had the satisfaction of seeing the fellow throw away his gun and limp to the rear.

"Stand firm!" It was the cry of Major Morris of the battalion, and scarcely had it been issued when the rebels flung themselves headlong at the first two companies. They came on with fixed bayonets, swords, and long sugar-cane knives, and the shock was a heavy one. Most of them wore but little clothing, and as their forms were dark they could scarcely be distinguished in the night.

Such bravery was certainly worthy of a better cause. But the Americans were now on their mettle, and fired as rapidly as they could, retreating

to the brush only to reload. In the meantime the second battalion had been ordered still further to the left, and now the rebels were caught between two fires. They stood this for perhaps five minutes, then broke and ran for the rice field with all the power of their sturdy legs.

"After them, men; we must teach them a lesson they won't forget!" shouted the colonel of the regiment, who had served in Porto Rico and who was anxious to make a record for himself here. And away went the second battalion, followed by the first, while the third remained where it had been originally stationed, with orders to spread out and cover as much of the picket line as possible.

"Those men are bound to get into Manila to-night, if the trick can be done," remarked Captain Larchmore to Ben, as they swept along, with Lieutenant David Ross near them. "Just listen to the crack of musketry on all sides. I'll wager our entire line from north to south is in this."

"I believe you, and if all the rebels are as dashing as those we just beat off, there is hot work on hand," answered Ross. "Eh, Russell?"

"Well, all we can do is to take care of our share of it," rejoined the young lieutenant. "Hullo,

those fellows are up to some new move!" he added, a second later.

The rice field had been passed by the insurgents, and now they disappeared into some brush which was backed up by the hill upon which rested their small field-piece. Soon the Americans were in the field after them, sinking up to their ankles in the mud and water.

"Tell you vot, dis ain't so fine," growled Carl Stummer. "Maype of ve ton't been careful ve go ofer our heads alretty, hey?"

"Sure, an' it ain't no worse nor it was in Cuby," answered Dan Casey. "Come on an' let us lick thim haythin out av their boots before th' sun comes up."

"Out of dare poots vos goot!" roared Stummer. "Da must haf peen licked out of dem poots alretty, for all I seen of dem vos parefooted, ha! ha!" And the laugh became so general that poor Casey got quite angry and said nothing more for the best part of an hour. Carl was right; many of the insurgents were barefooted, and not over three-quarters were properly equipped and trained as soldiers. Yet all of them, from the Igorrote spearmen to the Tagalos sharpshooters, knew how to fight.

"I believe they are making their way back to where they left that field-piece," said Captain Larchmore, as he ordered his company to move slowly to the centre of the rice field.

"It's so dark I can't see them any more," put in Ross. "I didn't think they would attack us at night."

"That's a way all Malayan races have, Dave," answered the captain. "Indians do the same thing. If they break through the lines anywhere, Heaven be merciful to the Americans left in Manila! They'll murder every soul!"

"I think one reason they attacked us in the dark is because they knew the warships in the harbor couldn't assist us. By daylight Dewey will get the range of them and make it warm; see if he doesn't," was Ben's comment. "Listen! I can't see or hear anything of them now, can you?"

Captain Larchmore brought his company to a halt, and soon the whole battalion came to a stop. Ben was right; the Filipinos had entered the brush as silently as so many shadows. Not another shot was fired by them, and it looked as if they were defeated and the engagement was at an end.

Somewhat perplexed, the commands remained at attention for nearly quarter of an hour. Then, fearing treachery, the colonel ordered all of the companies back to the trenches and rifle-pits. These gained, a hasty list of those who had been shot was made, and it was found that one man had been killed outright and four were more or less seriously wounded. One man, a sergeant of Company B, was reported missing.

"And who is it?" asked Ben, and his heart beat quickly for fear he was about to hear bad news.

"Gilbert Pennington," was the dismaying answer.

"And they don't know where he is?"

"No; he marched out into the rice field and he didn't come back, and they can't find his body anywhere," was the brief reply; and the young lieutenant walked away, his heart sinking like a lump of lead within him.

CHAPTER XX

THE SECOND DAY OF THE ATTACK

From a little point near Santa Mesa, the battle had gradually extended from the Tondo district of Manila on the north to the fortifications of Malate on the south, a distance of over seventeen miles.

In the city a good deal of alarm was felt. All the government buildings were closely guarded to prevent them from being set on fire ; extra guards were stationed everywhere, to keep the natives indoors, all places of amusement were summarily closed, the street cars were stopped, and all the American women and children who cared to go were taken on board of several of the transports lying in the harbor. After ten o'clock the only sound that broke the stillness of Manila was the steady tramp, tramp of the soldiers as they moved from one section to another or started for the outskirts.

The outbreak had occurred at a quarter to nine. It lasted about three-quarters of an hour, and then all became silent until about half-past ten, when the Filipinos tried to bring an old howitzer and several other field-guns into play, but with little success. They had now concentrated their forces at Santa Mesa, previously spoken of, Caloocan, to the northward, and at Galingatin. Occasional firing continued until about four o'clock Sunday morning, when another fierce attack was made, but without success. At daybreak the American forces received orders to advance all along the line. At the same time the *Monadnock* began shelling the Filipinos on the south shore, while other vessels under Dewey's command shelled the rebels concentrating around Caloocan.

One of the first advances to be made on Sunday was that by the Nebraskans who had been instrumental in bringing on the general engagement. Long before it was daylight, they had advanced well toward San Juan hill, hoping to take the water works. Aided by a Utah battery, they took a strong position overlooking the bridge upon which the Filipinos had concentrated. As day came on, one fierce skirmish after another took

place, but the Americans advanced steadily, took the bridge and held it, and at last gained the hill itself, being reënforced by another battery, and a battalion of Tennessee volunteers. The Filipinos, however, were not subdued, and simply retired to another hill, a short distance to the northeast.

To the southeast the rebels had made a strong stand at what was called Paco Church. The road leading to this place was thickly lined with bamboo huts, and in these the Filipino sharpshooters secreted themselves, firing on a small body of Americans at first and killing the driver of a carriage and putting their bullets into an ambulance belonging to the Red Cross Society. A reserve force, consisting of several companies of Californians, were sent after the sharpshooters, who were rooted out, and who then fled to the church and convent at Paco. Here the Californians continued to fire at them, while a battery, the Sixth Artillery, shelled the church and knocked in a portion of the roof. Finally, the building was set on fire, and the Filipinos fled, leaving large numbers of dead and wounded behind them.

Such was the main fighting to the eastward. Down on the south shore, near Singalon, the fight-

ing was just as fierce. Here the highway was a narrow one, with a veritable jungle of brush upon either side, and here the Fourteenth United States Regulars were caught and would have been annihilated, had it not been for the opportune arrival of other troops. The fighting of the rebels was worthy of a better cause, and it seemed as if they would never be driven back, but would instead make a straight rush into Manila. But at last, with a battalion of Americans in front of them, the right wing of General Ovenshine's brigade at their flank, and the *Monterey* shelling them at a distance, they gave up their intrenchments one after another and fled into the jungle and to a village four miles away.

Along the winding Pasig the battle was waged with equal vigor. This stream is built up for several miles beyond Manila proper, and the bamboo houses along its banks contained rebels and those who were secretly in sympathy with Aguinaldo's forces. To clean out such a "nest" was no light work, for while wanting to get at all who were in the fight the Americans did not desire to harm the non-combatants or the women and children. Hence the fighting was long drawn out, and a

large number of huts were burned down and other property destroyed. The non-combatants fled into Manila, carrying white rags, and these signals of peace were flown from the houses in the city where they took refuge.

On the north of the city the fight was for what is known as Cemetery Ridge, a long stretch of upland, covered here and there with groves of trees and tropical brush, and at other points with neglected plantations. Toward the top of the hill is a large cemetery, and near it the Binondo church, with a Chinese church not far off. Through this territory a well-kept road runs into Caloocan, lined on both sides with huts and houses, the greater portion of them deserted. Here is also located the only railroad in the island of Luzon, a single-track affair running to several cities and towns still further north.

On Sunday morning the advance northward was made by five distinct commands: the Kansas volunteers, who acted close to the water's edge, next some regular artillery, but without guns, and then the volunteers from Montana, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota. Once again the company to which Ben belonged found itself on the firing line, and

at nine o'clock came the order for the first and second battalions to advance, the third battalion being held in reserve.

"It's rather tough, after a night without sleep," remarked Lieutenant Ross. "But I suppose it's best to follow these rebels up, now we have started in."

"If we don't follow them up, they'll be right down on top of us again," answered Ben. "I go in for giving them a sound thrashing. It's the only way to bring them to terms. By the way, I wonder if they have heard anything more about Gilbert Pennington."

"They found his gun down in that rice field. The rebels are hard up for weapons, but they won't take our Springfields. They want Mauser rifles, or none at all. I reckon they think our old guns make too much smoke," concluded Ross and hurried off to the field.

Ever since Gilbert had been reported missing, Ben had worried about his chum. Had it been possible, he would have gone off on a still hunt for the Southerner, but at present every officer and man was needed in the ranks. I'll try to get off as soon as fighting comes to an end for the day," he said to himself.

The first battalion was spread out to a considerable distance along the small stream previously mentioned. Since sunrise not an insurgent had appeared in sight, and for over two hours not a single shot had been fired in the vicinity. But all felt that this was the calm before the storm.

"Boys, we are going across yonder rice field," sang out Major Morris. "If the rebels show themselves, fire at will. Forward — March!"

"Forward — March!" repeated Captain Larchmore, and away went Company D, on the left flank, with Company H of the second battalion directly behind it. The brook had scarcely been crossed, than there came a crack of Mausers from the jungle of brush far ahead, and one man went down, hit in the leg.

The opening fire of the Filipinos was answered by a rallying cry from the Americans, and an almost solid volley was fired in return. Whether or not it was effective could not then be ascertained. The advance was now increased to a double quick, and shooting became general upon both sides.

"Sure, an' this bes a great battlefield!" cried Dan Casey, as he sank up to his ankles in the

sticky mud. "It's worse nor the bogs av ould Ireland, so it is!"

"Neffer mind, Dan, I vos haul you out!" answered Stummer. And slinging his rifle over his shoulder he pulled so hard that when Casey came out, the German volunteer slipped back and went flat.

"Now, bedad, ye have done it!" howled the Irishman. "Here, up ye come, an' none the worse fer the wather an' mud on yer back! Forward, an' don't let that cartridge belt slip away, or that ould smoke-maker will be no good to yez!" And he buckled up Stummer's belt. The fall had caused a break in the advancing line, but this was not noticed, as breaks soon became general, although more or less of a straight front was constantly maintained.

As the Americans came closer to the brush the rebels increased their fire, and several additional men went down. But the streaks of fire from the Mausers could now be seen distinctly, and each became a target for one or more American bullets.

"Let them have it, men — don't falter!" cried Captain Larchmore. "We will soon be under shelter. Come on!" And he led the way, fol-

lowed by his first lieutenant and by Ben, all anxious to get into the fray.

The shooting was now at such close range that orders came to drop, and down went the long line, at first on one knee and then flat on the men's chests. Just ahead was a little bank of dirt, thrown up from a ditch to one side of the rice field, and this offered a small but welcome shelter during the time that the command stopped to get its second wind.

"Those fellows are stubborn fighters," whispered Captain Larchmore to Ben. "They are doing better than I expected. It is going to be no picnic cleaning out yonder jungle."

"There is a rise of ground just ahead," answered the young lieutenant. "Have you any idea what is beyond?"

"Another plain and an abandoned plantation. Following that comes a second hill, and further on is the cemetery and the Binondo church. One of the scouts told the major that that next field is cut up by wire fences."

"That makes it bad, captain. I had all I want of wire fencing at San Juan in Cuba. At one of the fences the Spanish had put up we lost the

majority of those that went under. But it can't be helped, and we'll have to make the best of it," concluded Ben, as he leaped to his proper position again, as the bugle sounded the command for another advance.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TAKING OF CEMETERY RIDGE

THE firing was now general for a distance of over a dozen miles, and several of the warships in the bay were making matters as lively as possible for the insurgents. But the rebels had one advantage: they knew the ground they were traversing thoroughly, and when they retreated they did all they could to lead the Americans into dangerous swamps and open plains, while they themselves took to the jungle, the hills, and other points where the bullets of the enemy could not easily find them.

But our soldiers had waited too long for this opening of hostilities to hold back, no matter what the consequences. Those who had lain in the trenches for months, in burning sunshine and pitiless rain, were wild to "pitch in," and nothing could stop them from making long advances in every direction. "We'll show the rebels that we

can wax 'em, if only we're allowed to do it," said one old regular from Idaho, and his words expressed the sentiment of his whole company.

From the trench in the rice field the distance to the nearest brush was less than sixty yards, yet to cover this space was extremely perilous, and all those in the first battalion realized it only too well.

"Sure, an' thim nagers is onto us," muttered Casey, as he hopped up. "See that, now!"

"Down!" came the cry, when less than half the distance had been covered, and down the command went, while a perfect storm of bullets swept over the men's heads. Before the rebels could fire again, the Americans had discharged a volley in return, and the first fringe of brush was gained. Seeing this, the insurgents took to the jungle leading up to the hill upon which the cemetery already described was located.

The sun was under a cloud, and it looked as if it would rain, but even in the shadow of the tropical trees the air was stifling. Already some of the soldiers had thrown away their blanket rolls, and now more followed. "I've got to do it, or fall behind!" panted one private to Ben, when the second

lieutenant expostulated. "This heat is killing!" Others said the same, and the rolls were left where they fell, to be hunted for later on, when the advance should be a thing of the past.

It was now that Ben got his first taste of a genuine tropical jungle, with its palms and plantains, enormous ferns, gum trees, mangoes, guavas, oranges, and citrons, all interlaced with the palasan, a thick vine which grows to the length of several hundred feet, and which gives forth a rank odor when crushed under foot. The soil was black, in some places little better than muck, and when disturbed showed itself to be full of beetles, ants, lizards, toads, and various other insects and small animals, as well as snakes.

"This beats Cuba," said Ben. "Even the jungle at La Guasima wasn't as bad as this." He wondered if they would ever get through, but said nothing on that point, not wishing to discourage the men under him.

"The rebels have turned to the left," announced Captain Larchmore, after receiving the news from an advanced guard composed of three picked sharpshooters. "I believe there is something of a road in that direction. We'll try it and see."

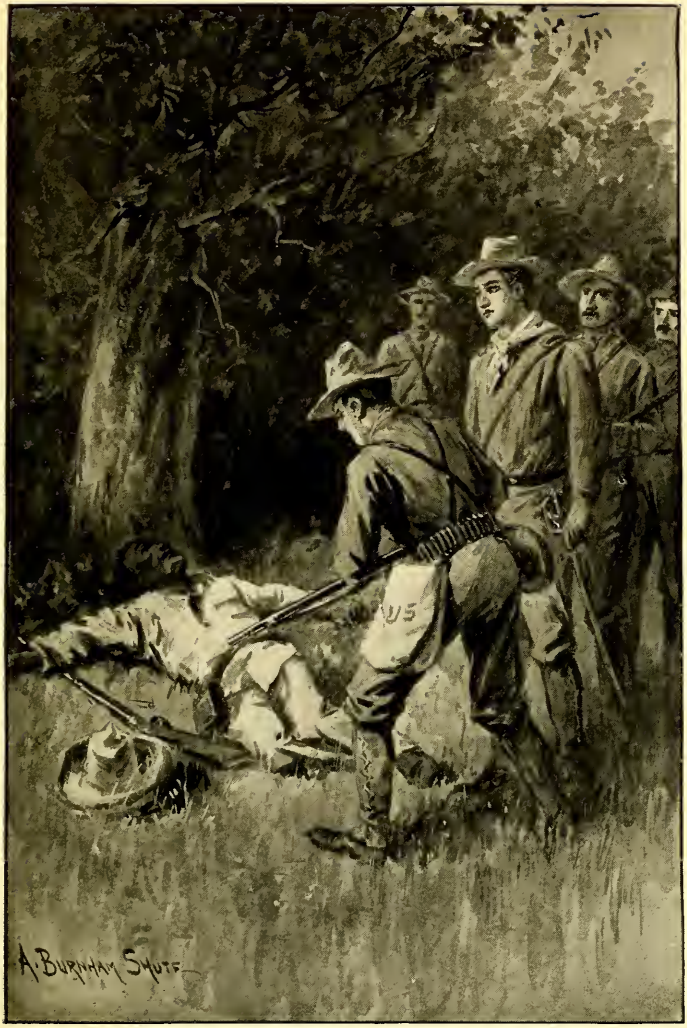
"They may be leading us into a trap," muttered Ross.

"We'll go slow," answered the commander, and on they went, breaking through the brush as best they could. In some spots swords and pocket knives had to be used freely.

"There is somebody crying for help!" exclaimed Ben, as a faint moan reached his ears. He moved in the direction of the sound and found a wounded Filipino propped up against the roots of a mango tree. The man's eyes had a glassy stare and it was easy to see that he was dying.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked Ben, kindly, and pointed to his canteen, half filled with water. But at this the insurgent shook his head fiercely. Then suddenly he picked up his rifle with one hand, pointed the muzzle toward the young lieutenant, and pulled the trigger.

Had the weapon been loaded, Ben would have been killed on the spot. But luckily the Mauser was empty, and nothing but the snapping of the trigger to the weapon followed. "You treacherous rascal!" cried Ben, when, throwing up both arms, the Filipino fell over on his face, dead. At first the young soldier thought he was shamming



"He's a goner, lieutenant." — *Page* 204.

and drew his pistol in order to avoid further treachery, but Casey came rushing up and turned the dead man over with his gun, and Ben readily saw that life was indeed extinct.

"He's a goner, lieutenant," said the Irish volunteer. "He saved me the trouble av killin' him."

"He was a bad one, that's certain," murmured Ben. He could scarcely speak, the scene had so unnerved him. Such treachery was almost beyond his comprehension. He had yet to learn that the Filipinos are of two classes, those who are as upright and honest as any nation on the face of the earth, and those of almost pure Malayan blood, who are full of cunning and trickery, and who have absolutely no conscience.

As Captain Larchmore had surmised, there was a jungle path to the left, and into this the first battalion turned, the men crowding onward four abreast. The path was much choked up and many a face and hand was badly scratched. Presently the men in front came to an unexpected halt.

"We're blocked! The rebels have put us into a trap!"

"What's the trouble now?" asked a score of voices at once.

"There is a quagmire ahead and the logs that lay over it have been hauled away."

This reply was partly drowned by a volley of musketry from ahead and still further to the left. Here was a slight rise of ground occupied by fully three hundred Filipinos, all well armed, those without good firing pieces having continued to retreat, carrying the majority of their wounded with them.

For the moment, the Americans were nonplussed; then a rapid search was made along the quagmire for a suitable spot at which to cross. At the same time, the soldiers fired at every Filipino who showed himself, and cries of pain and rage told plainly that many a bullet reached its mark.

Ben's company had branched off to the extreme right, by order of the major of the battalion. Here the quagmire was not over twenty feet broad. Still it was deep and exceedingly sticky, and not a man dared to venture into it.

"Of a fellow got into dot up to his middle, not a dozen horses could pull him owit!" exclaimed Stummer. "Dot mud vos worse nor glue alretty."

"We've got to get over somehow," cried Ben.

"Our formation is all cut up here, and those Filipinos can pick us off at will. I think I see a way over. It's worth trying, at any rate."

He pointed to several tall trees growing upon either side of the quagmire. Between the trees hung several festoons of the rope like palasan vine, one of them within easy reach.

"That's risky," shouted the captain; still, when Ben began to climb along the vine, he did not attempt to stop the young volunteer. Soon the youth was well out and in plain view of the insurgents. A shot rang forth, but the bullet sped several feet overhead, and in a second more Ben was safe in the brush beyond.

What one could do more could do, and in a twinkling the vines growing over the quagmire were alive with soldiers. Fortunately the palasan is strong, and wherever its creepers take hold they are bound to stay; so the number of soldiers that fell into the sticky mud was small, and these were rescued without serious damage being done. But now the rebels had the range of the spot, and a scattering fire put several Americans out of the contest forever, while twice as many more had to be sent to the field hospital in the rear.

It was soon found that the body of insurgents ahead were located on an isolated hill not over twenty acres in extent, and the Americans at once determined, if possible, to surround them and cut them off from the rest of their army.

"The first battalion will push along on the right, the second on the left, and the third will keep well to the front," ordered the colonel of the regiment. And he added that the first two divisions were to keep out of sight as much as possible.

The latter order meant more cutting through the jungle. There was also a stream to cross, the banks of which were slimy with decayed vegetation. The heat was now greater than ever, and several members of Company D dropped out, including the first lieutenant.

"I can't go on!" panted Ross. "My head is spinning like a top. Go on and wipe 'em out!" and he sank in the shade, completely exhausted. Ben at once notified the captain, and two men were detailed to carry the first lieutenant to the rear, while Ben became the second in command.

Inside of half an hour, the rear of the little hill had been gained by Companies D and E of Ben's regiment. So far these companies had not fired

a shot since leaving the quagmire, but now, contrary to orders, half a dozen privates let drive, bringing down two rebels and advising them of the true situation.

"That's too bad!" cried Captain Larchmore. "We ought to have waited for reënforcements. But it can't be helped now. Here they come. Stand firm, men, and give it to them hot. Take aim — fire!" And the long line of Springfield rifles spoke up, creating great havoc in the first company of Filipinos and bringing the whole command to a halt.

But the rebel leader now realized fully that unless he made a desperate effort his command would be hemmed in and annihilated, and again he urged his fellows forward, using the favorite battle-cry: "*Viva la Republica Filipina!*" — Long live the Philippine Republic!

The first shock was terrific, and a score of men went down in the twinkling of an eye. Rifles were discharged at close range, and then, as there was not time to reload, bayonets sprung into use, or the weapons were used as clubs. Ben soon found himself surrounded, and cut out right and left with his sword. Once he felt the blow of a

gun on his shoulder, and swung around to catch the rebel in the side with his blade, causing the man to flee with a yell of pain.

"Captain Larchmore is down!" Who uttered the cry Ben could not tell. Looking in the direction where the gallant captain had stood, the young lieutenant could see nothing of him. But there was a crowd of Filipinos there and half a dozen American soldiers among them, and he hurried to the spot with all speed.

The captain had been thrown in a most unexpected manner. While striking at a Filipino in front of him, somebody had shot the man down, and he had pitched headlong and the American over him. Before the captain could rise, several of the rebels were at him, anxious to hack the officer of the "vile *Americanos*" to pieces. The captain had used his pistol with some effect, but now the weapon was empty.

As Ben came upon the scene, he found a short, heavy-set Filipino in the act of stabbing his commander in the back with a bayonet, while a second rebel was about to club the unfortunate officer in the head with the butt of his Mauser.

It was a time in which to think and act quickly,

and it must be confessed that Ben did his acting first and his thinking afterward. Taking aim at the fellow with the bayonet, he pulled the trigger of his pistol and took the insurgent directly in the neck, inflicting an ugly if not a fatal wound. Then he fired a second time, and the rebel who had thought to use his gun as a club staggered back with a ball in his shoulder. Ben had learned to shoot straight, and just now he meant business.

"Lieutenant Russell, you have saved my life!" burst out Captain Larchmore. "I'll not forget you for this!" And then he ran on, to call his scattered command together. Ben went after him, and soon the broken line was re-formed. But the insurgents could not be forced back, and, breaking through, they fled helter-skelter over a plain and up Cemetery Ridge, leaving the dead and wounded behind them, as well as over a score who threw down their arms and gave themselves up as prisoners of war.

"We've got them on the run!" was the cry. "Don't give them a chance to rest, boys! Pour it into 'em hot!" And away went the American soldiers, the officers in many cases leading. Soon the outskirts of the cemetery itself were gained,

and the Chinese church became plainly visible through the smoke which arose on every side.

"The cemetery is all cut up with wire fences," cried Ben, after a survey through a pair of field glasses. "We'll have a fine job getting up to the church."

"And the whole place is alive with rebels,' answered Captain Larchmore. "Those headstones make famous shelters."

From over to the right and the left of the regiment the firing was incessant, showing that the other portions of the American army were not idle. All the troops mentioned in the first advance were closing up toward the hill, and in addition a Utah battery had come up and was firing heavy shells into the church, which, it could plainly be seen, was crowded with Filipinos. In the meantime there was another hot fight going on in the vicinity of the Binondo church.

In a minute more Company D was over the wall of the cemetery and rushing with all speed up the slope to the first of the wire barriers. A volley from the Chinese edifice greeted them, followed by another from a body of rebels lying in a slight hollow toward the other church.

"Fire at will!" shouted the commander, and the constant crack! crack! of hundreds of Springfield rifles answered the command, clearing the windows of both churches in an instant. Then came a rush of insurgents across the graveyard. Some were cut down, but the majority reached the churches, and now the concentrated fire of the Americans made the buildings "about the hottest places on earth," as Ben afterward expressed it. It was now after three o'clock, and the various commands had been under fire from six to seven hours without anything to eat and very little to drink.

But the contest so gloriously waged was soon to come to an end. Against such forces as were on hand and such as were coming up, the rebels could not hope to hold out, and soon they began to leave the churches and the farther end of the cemetery, first singly and then in squads and companies. Seeing this, the hope of the Americans arose higher than ever, and with a grand hurrah they pressed on until the very last of the Filipinos who was able had fled as fast as his limbs could carry him. Cemetery Ridge was ours, and the fighting to the north of Manila had been as successful as that to the east and the south.

CHAPTER XXII

BEN GOES ON A HUNT FOR GILBERT

IMMEDIATELY after the fighting was over, the wounded and those who had been prostrated by the heat were cared for, and then the commissary department took upon itself the task of transporting food to the soldiers who had fought so gallantly.

It was an easy matter to supply the regiment to which Ben belonged, and soon the cooks of Company D were preparing the best meal at their command, the "boys" in the meanwhile brushing up their dirty and bedraggled uniforms and smoked guns, and bathing in such water as was handy. When it came to eating, every tin plate full of food and cupful of coffee disappeared as if by magic. In the meantime a strong picket guard was sent some distance beyond the ridge, so that the enemy might not steal in on the Americans during the approaching night. But the picket guard was unnecessary, for the Filipinos had had

enough of fighting for the present, and were quite willing to keep their distance.

It is safe to say that Aguinaldo's forces, as well as the general himself and his immediate advisers, were astonished and dismayed at what had occurred. They had not dreamed that these Americans, who in the past had lived such a "free and easy" life in and around Manila, and who had even submitted (it was under strict orders from headquarters) to the petty insults which the rebels offered without resentment in force, could rise up and wage war so fiercely and relentlessly. They had looked for a mild battle and then a rush into Manila, and Aguinaldo had even arranged for feeding his army inside of the city, rice and other commodities being stored away in secret for that purpose. But here they were utterly routed, and with the Filipino army scattered in a dozen different directions. It is safe to say that, had General Otis had sufficient troops at this time to cover the necessary territory, he could have crushed the entire uprising in less than three days. But his force was not large enough, and the most he could do was to keep affairs in Manila quiet and guard all the highways leading into the city.

Ben was as hungry as anybody, and it did not take him long to dispose of the food dealt out to him. While he ate he conversed with Captain Larchmore, and afterward with his major, and learned that no other immediate advance was contemplated; instead, General Otis had sent word that the column must rest as it was.

"If we aren't to do any fighting, I should like a few hours' leave of absence," said Ben, and explained that he wished to take a look around in the hope of learning what had become of Gilbert. Permission to go was granted, and he hurried away, taking with him a private of Company B, who had been detailed to hunt up the missing sergeant. The private's name was Ralph Sorrel, and the young lieutenant found him a particularly bright and handy fellow to have along.

"I kin take ye right down to whar I seed the sergeant last, lieutenant," said Sorrel, who had come from the mountains of Tennessee, and who was, consequently, well up in woodcraft. "It war in a leetle hollow a right smart step to the left o' that water patch."

"Well, it's mighty odd what became of him. I can hardly believe that the Filipinos made any prisoners."

"I don't think they did, lieutenant — not ez a general rule. But it might be ez how they took some, jess to see wot they could git out of 'em — understand?"

"Yes, I understand. Well, if they captured Sergeant Pennington for that purpose —"

"They barked up the wrong tree — thet's right, lieutenant. Sergeant Pennington would see 'em all hanged afore he would open his jaw fer their benefit. He's true blue, he is. I understand ye an' him war chums. Wall, ye couldn't have no better runnin' mate — no, sah!" concluded Sorrel.

The Tennesseean was a tall, lank fellow who believed in covering ground rapidly, and it was all Ben could do to keep up with him. Long before sundown the abandoned rice field was gained and a search instituted, which gradually led the pair to a narrow road running up to what had once been a small village of nipa huts, but which was now little better than a heap of smouldering ashes.

"This is the way a small lot of them rebels took," said Sorrel, as he examined the ground with the care of an Indian trailer. "Yere air the footprints ez plain ez day — an' yere are the footprints of a

pair of boots or shoes!" went on the Tennesseean, suddenly.

The tracks interested Ben, but he could make little out of them. "I suppose some of the rebels that came this way had shoes —" he began, when Sorrel cut him short.

"They didn't have no sech footwear ez them, lieutenant. Them's American-made hoof coverin's; mark my words ef they ain't."

"I don't believe it will do any harm to follow up the tracks for a short distance, Sorrel," answered the young officer. "But we must be careful and not run into any ambush. I'm beginning to think these Filipinos are as wily as Indians."

"Reckon they air, lieutenant. But we'll have our eyes open for 'em," was the return, and Sorrel examined his rifle, while Ben saw to it that his pistol was ready for use.

The road was strewn with articles which the rebels had thrown away on their retreat, — rifles, clubs, and bits of wearing apparel, as well as cooking-utensils.

"Hullo, here's something!" cried Ben, after quarter of a mile had been covered. He pointed to a blanket roll lying in some bushes. Bringing it forth,

he unrolled it and made an examination of the contents.

"It's Gilbert's," he said soberly. "We are on the right track, beyond a doubt. The question is, how far have they taken him."

"An' if we kin git him away from the rebs," added Sorrel. "I'm willin' to go in an' do my best, lieutenant."

"Our best will depend upon how the land lies, Sorrel. I'm willing to go ahead, too, but it will be foolish to stick our heads into the lion's mouth just to see what he's got in his throat. Now which way?"

As Ben concluded, they reached a fork in the road. Here there had once stood a warehouse for rice, but this was burned down, and a vast heap of rice lay smouldering in the ruins.

"I reckon ez how they took the road to the south, lieutenant."

"I believe you are right. If we— Down, quick!"

Ben dropped flat, and his companion was not long in doing likewise. The young officer had seen the glint of a Mauser barrel through some foliage beside the road. Three reports rang out,

but the trio of leaden messengers flew far overhead, clipping the leaves of a mango tree as they sped on their way.

As rapidly as he could bring his gun into position, the tall Tennesseean fired. Sorrel was used to hitting birds on the wing, and his skill as a marksman proved itself by a sudden howl of pain not fifty yards away. Ben wanted to fire, but by the time he had risen again nobody was in sight.

"Hurry, lieutenant!" yelled Sorrel, and started for a series of rocks behind the burnt warehouse. Again came a single report, and now Ben fired in return. If the shot hit, the Filipino gave no sign. But he withdrew as rapidly as he had appeared.

The rocks were not over four feet in height, yet they afforded ample shelter from any attack of the enemy on the opposite side of the road. But back of the rocks was another jungle, and both felt that the enemy might easily make a detour and come up behind them.

"I reckon we're lookin' into the lion's mouth now," observed Sorrel, as he proceeded to reload.

"So we are, and I don't like it. The best thing we can do is to get out just as soon as possible."

"How?"

"By taking to the wood behind us. It would be foolishness to attempt to go ahead. More than likely we are close to a rebel camp."

"All right; I'm ready to move when you air," answered Sorrel.

With weapons ready for use, they threw themselves on the ground and began to worm their way through the tall grass in the direction of the jungle. The distance to be covered was a little over a hundred feet. With a heart that beat rapidly, Ben wondered if they could make it without being discovered.

"The darkness will help us a little," said Sorrel, who read the young lieutenant's thoughts. "But we have got to be mighty careful."

The grass had been thick near the rocks, but as they approached the brush it grew more sparingly, until there was left but little to cover them. As they came out into full view, Ben set his teeth hard. He fully expected a shot and wondered where it would hit him. But no shot came, and in a few seconds more the jungle had hidden them from view.

"We are well out of that," muttered Sorrel. "It war a close shave, eh?"

"I can't understand why they didn't shoot at us again. They had a fair chance."

"Perhaps they war watchin' them rocks too closely. Or else there may be some of 'em over yere, an'— Hush!"

Sorrel became silent and clutched Ben by the arm. In the semi-darkness he had made out several forms moving around a little clearing ahead of them. Soon other forms appeared, until the two counted eight Filipinos, all armed.

"We've fallen into a nest of them," whispered Ben. "We had better retreat, and lose no time about it."

"To the road?"

"No, along this side of the road. There is no use in uncovering ourselves until it is absolutely necessary."

"Right ye air, lieutenant," was the Tennesseean's comment.

It was no easy matter to move ahead in the jungle, which seemed to grow thicker as they advanced. Ben's hands and face were scratched, and once he went down into a snake-hole up to his knees. The reptiles, little fellows, came forth hissing fiercely, and the young lieutenant went crashing on ahead to get out of the way.

"I didn't bargain to fight snakes," said the youth, when Sorrel asked what was the matter. "Ugh! what a hole to step into!" And he shuddered.

"You've given 'em the alarm," said the tall Tennesseean, a moment later. "The whole crowd is piling this way just as fast as it can. I'll bet they got word from the other side of the road that we were around yere!"

CHAPTER XXIII

IN A FILIPINO ENCAMPMENT

SORREL was right; the Filipinos in the jungle had received word from those who had first fired upon the two Americans, and now the whole party was in pursuit of the pair.

"We can't get out fast enough," said Ben, as they tried in vain to break their way through the mass of brush and vines. "Those fellows can beat us at the work ten to one. I think the best thing we can do is to hide again."

"Kin ye shin up a tree, lieutenant, ef I give ye a boost?" asked Sorrel, and receiving a reply in the affirmative, the Tennesseean helped Ben to ascend a small mango, and quickly pulled himself out of sight.

The movement was none too soon, for hardly had they secreted themselves than the Filipinos appeared, coming along in an irregular line which spread out to the distance of a hundred feet. They

advanced as silently as shadows, and the Americans hardly dared to breathe as they passed under the mango tree.

"That war another narrow shave," chuckled Sorrel, when the danger appeared to be past. "Those fellows won't miss a thing that is on the ground."

"Then how about our footprints and the vines we ripped to pieces?" asked Ben. "I think we had better be making tracks."

"Right ag'in, lieutenant. Down we go!" and Sorrel dropped to the ground. Ben came after him, and once more they set off, but in a different direction from that which the rebels had taken.

It was now growing dark rapidly, and soon they found it impossible to see a dozen feet ahead of them. They were ascending a hill, but in what direction neither could tell. The ground was becoming very stony and rough, and presently Ben called a halt.

"We are lost in the jungle, and there is no use in going ahead unless we know where we are going to," he said. "There doesn't seem to be a road anywhere."

"I was in hopes we should git to the top o' the

hill an' have a chance to squint around," answered Sorrel. "I don't think the top is far off, because we have climbed a considerable distance, an' none o' these hills air very tall."

"All right then, we'll go on a bit further, although this fighting through is mighty tiresome," said the young lieutenant.

The Tennesseean's surmise proved correct, and five minutes later they reached a small clearing, overlooking the Pasig River and the jungle through which they had passed. Far in the distance twinkled the lights of Manila and closer by could be seen the campfires of a portion of the American army. Behind the hill burnt other campfires, belonging to the insurgents.

"We have turned around considerable, I allow," remarked Sorrel, as he surveyed the situation. "If I ain't mistaken thet's a road down to the left."

"I think so, too," said Ben, straining his eyes in the direction. "But if it is, I'm afraid we'll have a tough time getting to it, for the jungle in that direction is thicker than where we came through. We might try — Hullo, there is another campfire springing up, right behind us!"

The young lieutenant pointed with his hand,

and they watched what was taking place with interest. He had seen a bit of a dry branch burning. This was applied to a heap of brush, and extra wood was piled on top. The blaze was a bright one, and by the light Ben made out the forms of a score of Filipinos and one white man.

"There is a soldier—" he began, when Sorrel cut him short.

"Sergeant Pennington, lieutenant!" he ejaculated. "We struck it putty close, after all, didn't we?"

"It is Gilbert!" exclaimed Ben. "He doesn't seem to be wounded, either. He has his hands tied behind him."

"Let us git a bit closer," suggested the tall Tennesseean.

Ben was willing, and leaving the clearing, they dove once more into the jungle. Both had been careful to obtain "the lay of the land," and they pursued a straight course for the campfire of the enemy, which lay in a tiny hollow close beside a spring of pure, cold water.

"Be careful, there may be pickets out," whispered Ben, as they approached to a point where the occupants of the camp could be plainly distinguished.

"I don't see a soul, lieutenant. I reckon they've gone in to feed," was Sorrel's reply. He was right; all the Filipinos were gathered around the fire, eager to obtain what two of the number were dealing out. In the meantime, Gilbert had been loosely bound to a tree.

"I wonder if I can't crawl up behind that tree and cut him loose," muttered Ben, after a long pause, during which the pair had watched what was going on.

"Don't be rash, lieutenant. Cutting him free ain't gittin' him away, remember. We've got to do the trick slick-like, or we'll have thet whole tribe down on us in a jiffy," returned Sorrel, as he threw himself flat on his chest and crawled closer to where Gilbert stood a prisoner.

The Filipinos were a well-dressed set, quite in contrast to the majority of Aguinaldo's army. All were armed with Mauser rifles, and carried pistols in addition. They were commanded by a captain, —a lean, hungry-looking Tagal with a most villanous expression.

As Ben and Sorrel paused to consider the situation, the leader of the Filipinos approached Gilbert, swinging his sword in his hand as he did so.

"Is he going to harm Gilbert, do you think?" whispered Ben hurriedly, at the same time fingering his pistol nervously.

"He won't have time," was Sorrel's laconic reply, as he drew a bead on the advancing captain. "The gun kin do the trick surer nor thet pistol, lieutenant."

"Then you can have the first shot, if it becomes necessary," agreed Ben.

"Well, which do you *Americano* choose?" demanded the Filipino, in such good English that the young lieutenant was astonished.

"I have already given you my answer," came from Gilbert, in a dry, husky voice.

"You will neither join nor give us information?"

"That is what I said."

"You would like to eat and drink?"

"Yes, I want water, and you are a brute to keep it from me," cried the young Southerner.

"We are not brutes, señor; we play the art of war, as you *Americanos* call it. You come here and would take our beloved country from us. What say you if the Filipinos come to the United States and take them from you?"

"We won't argue that point, captain. But I can

tell you one thing, — we don't treat our prisoners of war in this fashion. As long as we have it, we give them enough to eat and to drink. You haven't given me a drop of water since you captured me."

"And not a drop shall you drink until you are willing to speak, or swear to join us."

"Do you think I would become a traitor to my own country?" demanded Gilbert. "You don't know us Americans."

"Bah! You are talking that of which you know nothing," retorted the Filipino. "In our army we already have fifty or more *Americanos*. They know we are in the right and have joined us willingly."

"They are traitors, nevertheless, captain, and I reckon most of them are fellows who are better out of our army than in it — chaps who are continually getting into trouble with their officers."

"They are noble men," growled the Filipino leader. He scowled deeply. "You will not join us?"

"As I said before, no."

"And you will not give us the information we seek?"

"I don't know anything — I am a common soldier."

"Again I say, bah! You know a great deal. You are a spy. If not, why did you try to enter our lines on the sly, tell me that?"

"I was partly overcome by the heat and did not know what I was doing. I thought I was walking toward our own line," answered Gilbert, and he told the exact truth. "If I had dreamed I was coming this way, I would have turned back at once."

"It is only another of your Yankee tricks!" replied the Filipino captain. "Will you speak or will you not? This is the last time I shall ask the question. If you refuse to speak, I shall order you shot."

"Will General Aguinaldo allow such a proceeding?" asked Gilbert, his face growing pale.

"General Aguinaldo is not here. We are commanded by General Maxacosta — and we do as we please. We cannot be bothered with prisoners, so you must either join us and tell us all you know, or I will order up a guard to shoot you."

"I won't join and I have nothing to tell," cried Gilbert, desperately. "If you kill me, my blood will be on your head."

"And what of the blood of the thousands of poor Filipinos who have been slaughtered this day?

Their souls cry for vengeance! They did not deserve death, for they simply fought for what your grandfathers fought in your war with England — your freedom. We too will one day be free — America shall never rule us!"

Thus speaking, the Filipino captain turned away, his face full of rage and hate, for the defeat on the battlefield had made him more bitter than ever against the Americans. Approaching the campfire, he called forth three of the Tagal soldiers and told them what he wanted done. At once the fellows picked up their rifles, saw to it that they were properly loaded, and stepped forth in line, ready to shoot Gilbert down at the word of command.

CHAPTER XXIV

INTO THE JUNGLE AND OUT

Ben and his tall companion had listened to the conversation just recorded with keen interest. It was evident that the Filipino captain was what is popularly known as a fire-eater, and intended to let nothing stand in the way of doing as he chose. He took Gilbert for a spy, and he intended that the young Southerner should either tell him all he knew and turn traitor to the United States, or else suffer death.

Gilbert's position was a truly perilous one, and he cannot be blamed if his heart leaped into his throat as he thought that his last hour on earth had come. It is no mean thing to face death, and no one realized it more than did this gallant young man who had made such a record for himself as a Rough Rider in Cuba.

But at the moment when he thought death so near, the Southerner's hopes revived with a shock

that nearly overcame him. From around the back of the tree to which he was bound appeared a hand, holding a sharp pocket-knife. A slash, and he found that his hands were once more free.

"Gilbert, follow me into the jungle, quick!" The voice was low and excited, yet he recognized Ben's tones instantly. Scarcely had the words been uttered than the young lieutenant started on the retreat.

Dumfounded, the young sergeant could not move for a second or two. "I must be dreaming!" he thought; but as his hands came free he understood, and glided around the tree trunk like a flash. But, as quick as he was, two of the soldiers saw him.

"The American is escaping!" one of them cried, in his native dialect — a very corrupt sort of Spanish. He raised his gun and fired, and the second soldier did the same. Then the captain saw what had occurred, and raised his pistol.

"The American pig shall die!" he yelled, but ere he could pull the trigger of his weapon Ralph Sorrel fired, and the Filipino leader fell into one of his men's arms, mortally wounded.

"Ben! by all that's glorious!" exclaimed Gilbert,

as he almost stumbled into his chum's arms. "How in the world did you get here?"

"There is no time to answer questions now," was the hurried reply. "Come this way, and make haste, for we'll soon have that whole crowd down on us."

The young lieutenant was running into the jungle as fast as he could. Gilbert followed in his footsteps, and Sorrel brought up in the rear, reloading his Springfield with all speed.

The shooting of the captain disconcerted the Filipinos for a minute or two, and all gathered around the fallen form to see how badly he was wounded. Sorrel's bullet had lodged in his chest, and several saw at once that there was no hope of the man's recovery.

"After the *Americano*, and after those who are aiding him to escape!" shouted the second in command. "They must not be allowed to escape! This crime must be avenged!" And he led the search, with half of the company following.

The Americans had gained a lead of a hundred feet when they heard the rebels coming behind them. Although it was now pitch dark, the Filipinos followed the trail readily, several of them being accustomed to jungle life from childhood.

"Let's give 'em a shot," suggested Sorrel, and swung his rifle into place. The report of the gun was followed by two cracks from Ben's pistol. A scream of pain told them that at least one of the enemy had been struck.

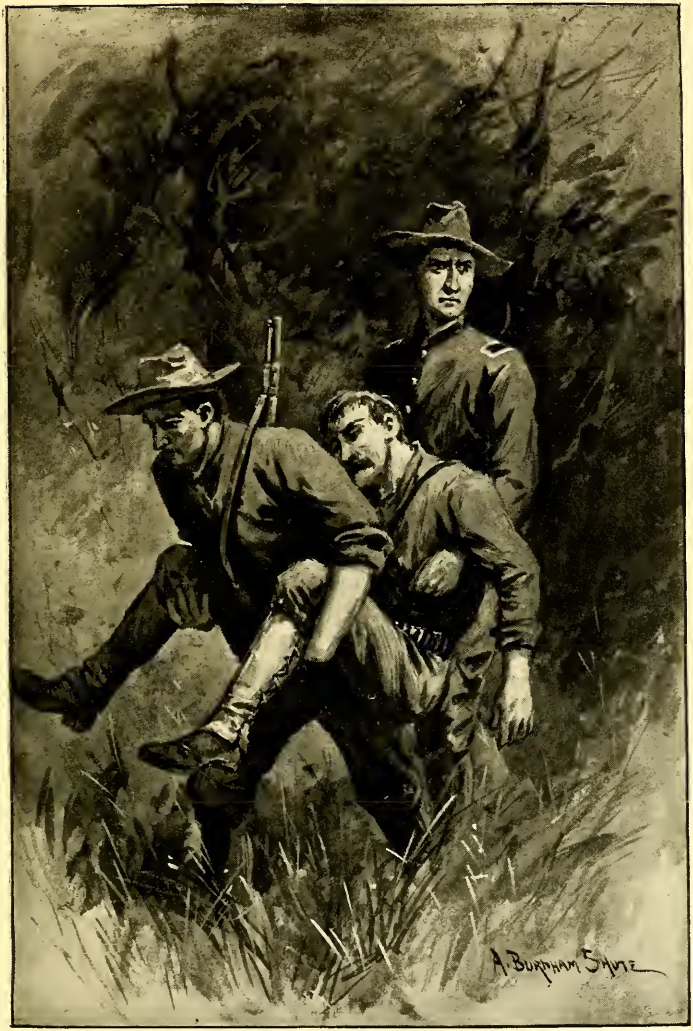
The firing, however, uncovered the position of the Americans, and before they could shift, several of the Filipinos let fly a volley in return. The report had scarcely rung out when Ben heard Sorrel utter a subdued "Oh!"

"Are you hit?"

"Yes, in the shoulder," came with a gasp. "Hang the luck! I'm done fer, so far ez firin' is concerned!" and the tall Tennesseean's rifle fell to the ground. "Take it, Pennington, an' go on. Don't mind me." And Sorrel gave another gasp of pain.

"I shan't leave you," answered Gilbert, decidedly. "You risked your life to save mine. Come on, if you can walk. We'll find a hiding-place somewhere." He took the rifle and slipped a cartridge into it from Sorrel's belt, his own being empty.

They had been heading eastward, directly for Manila. A few feet further on they came to a



"He and Gilbert raised the body between them." — *Page* 237.

sudden drop in the ground. "Here is a gully; perhaps we can hide in it," whispered Ben, and made such an examination as the darkness admitted. He was soon down beside a tiny watercourse. On the opposite bank was a series of rocks, thickly overgrown with vines and brush.

"Let me help you down, Sorrel," he went on. "Here is water, and that will leave no trail. We are bound to get away if we — he's fainted!"

Ben was right; unable to stand the pain in his shoulder, the tall Tennesseean had collapsed, falling almost on top of the young lieutenant. Ben braced him up, and then both he and Gilbert raised the body between them and hurried on.

The load was heavy, and it was fortunate that they did not have to carry it far. Less than a score of yards were covered, when they came to a small cliff, under which there was a good-sized hollow, as Ben discovered by pulling aside the hanging vines.

"Let us take a stand here," whispered the young lieutenant, and they pushed into the opening, laid the unconscious man down, and pulled the vines again into place. Then, scarcely daring to breathe, they waited.

Soon they heard the Filipinos in the water, and presently, two of the company passed up the stream, while the remainder went down. But it was too dark to make out anything, and they were afraid to strike a light for fear of drawing the Americans' fire. Inside of quarter of an hour they passed out of hearing; and that was the last Ben and his friends saw of them.

As soon as it was evident that the coast was clear, at least for the time being, Gilbert crawled to the water's edge and regaled himself with a much-needed drink. He returned with a canteen full for Sorrel's benefit, and the unconscious man was bathed, and his wounded shoulder bound up as well as the darkness and the material at hand permitted. At first Ben thought to make a small fire, but Gilbert shook his head.

"I think it would be foolish," he said. "If they come down on us, what can we do? We can neither save ourselves nor Sorrel. Better keep shady." And his advice prevailed.

It was half an hour later before the Tennesseean opened his eyes and asked for more water. "I reckon I ain't hit so bad but wot I kin go on," he said presently. "But it won't be in no foot-

race, and it won't be fer two or three hours neither."

"We'll wait until early dawn," said Ben. "If we start now, we'll be sure to go astray."

As they lay under the rocks, Gilbert and Ben devouring some rations the latter had brought along, the Southerner related his experience in the hands of the Filipinos.

"They treated me fairly well at first," he said. "But I soon found out that they were trying to make me believe that to be a rebel was a glorious thing. I was dazed by the sun, and had it not been for some sort of a native drink made from leaves that one of the soldiers gave me, I believe I should have fallen and never gotten up again. The Filipinos were quarrelling among themselves, and I learned that there are a good many other head men besides General Aguinaldo. He leads in the province of Luzon, but in other portions of the island they hardly recognize him."

"I think myself this attack was a makeshift affair," answered Ben. "If they had concentrated their efforts at one point, I honestly believe they might have gone into Manila with a rush."

"General Otis, in his office in Manila, knows just

what he is doing, Ben. He knew all the weak points and the strong points, and he divided his troops accordingly. But if we gain much territory, I can't see how we are going to hold it. We'll have to garrison every town and every block-house, that's certain."

Both of the young volunteers were utterly worn out, and after seeing to it that Sorrel was resting in a fairly comfortable manner, they dropped off into a troubled sleep, from which Ben awakened about four o'clock.

"Wake up!" he called to Gilbert. "We haven't any time to lose if we want to get back to our camp by daylight."

"We want to be sure and strike the right trail," answered the young Southerner. Do you know the direction?"

"I think I do, but I'll climb one of yonder trees and make sure."

To mount one of the trees mentioned was no light task. But Ben was equal to it; and once in the top a fine view of the surrounding territory could be seen.

"There is the Chinese church," he said. "I reckon we had best make straight for that. There

isn't a Filipino in sight, around here," he added, as he descended. "I saw several camps, but they are far to the north and northeast."

Sorrel was already up. The Tennesseean declared that he was able to walk at least a mile or two, although his face was pale and haggard and he did not look it. A drink of water all around was had, and off they started, Ben in front, with his pistol drawn, Sorrel next, unarmed, and Gilbert bringing up in the rear with the rifle.

Thus fully a mile was left behind, the trail leading through the jungle and around a swamp overgrown with rank-smelling vegetation. At the swamp they encountered several flocks of birds of prey, and Sorrel announced that there must be dead bodies about. Soon they came in sight of half a score of dead Filipinos, left by their friends where they had fallen. The sight made Ben sick, and he turned away with a sigh.

"War is awful, Gilbert. I wonder if the folks at home realize how terrible it really is."

"A good many of them do not, Ben. If they did, they wouldn't shout for a fight every time complications arise between our country and some other nation. It seems to me this trouble out here

might have been settled without an appeal to arms."

On and on they went, until Sorrel began to lag behind, and then they sat down in the shade to rest. They had now reached a road running directly to the cemetery on the hilltop.

"Listen! I hear the rattle of wagon wheels!" cried Ben, a while later. "Be on guard, Gilbert!" and he leaped up and ran for some nearby brush. Sorrel and the Southerner did likewise, but the alarm was unnecessary, for the approaching turnout proved to be an ambulance belonging to General MacArthur's division, carrying several wounded who had been picked up in out of the way places. The ambulance was stopped, and those in charge agreed to take Sorrel on board and to the general hospital in Manila.

"Good-by," said Gilbert, tenderly. "I'll not forget you for what you did for me," and Sorrel smiled faintly, and said good-by to both him and Ben. Although the Tennesseean was not seriously wounded, it was many a day before he again appeared in the ranks.

With the wounded man off their hands, it was an easy matter for Ben and Gilbert to move along

in the direction where they were told their regiment lay, not far from the cemetery proper. Inside of an hour, they were back to their separate companies, each eating a hearty breakfast, and telling his story to the crowd that gathered around him.

CHAPTER XXV

THE TAKING OF CALOOCAN

THE first great battle with the Filipinos had been fought and won, and to the south and east the rebels were thoroughly demoralized and scarcely knew what to do next. They took shelter in every village, jungle, and trench they could find, but were dislodged from one position after another, and a large portion of the habitations they had occupied were destroyed. Four days after the big battle little was left of them in the directions mentioned.

But to the northward it was different. About twenty-five miles above Manila was Malolos, now the seat of Aguinaldo's government, a pretty town containing from twelve to fifteen thousand inhabitants. Between Malolos and Manila lay Caloocan, Polo, and several other places of minor importance, all along the single railroad of which the island boasted.

Feeling that if he was defeated in his attack on the city, the Americans would at once advance upon the Filipino capital, Aguinaldo had strongly fortified Caloocan and also its sister city, Malabon, lying directly west of it, on Manila Bay. Intrenchment after intrenchment had been thrown up, and along the railroad a masked battery was planted so that it might sweep not only the track, but also the cut through which the road ran. And while this was going on the scattered troops were driven together and sent to the vicinity with all possible speed, so that by Friday, February 10, the Filipino forces in and behind Caloocan numbered nearly fifteen thousand men.

But while the rebels had been active, the Americans had not been idle. As soon as the Filipinos east and south were widely scattered, such United States soldiers as could be spared from other firing lines were marched to the northward, beyond Binondo church, and on Thursday this portion of our army lay on the hill, with Caloocan but two miles away. Field glasses readily uncovered the rebels' activity.

"They are going to resist us for all they know how, lieutenant," remarked Captain Larchmore,

as he and Ben went forward to survey the situation.

"We ought not to give them so much time, captain, in my opinion," replied Ben, who was still acting first lieutenant, Ross being completely prostrated from the terrific heat. "I believe when you get an enemy on the run, to keep him on the run."

"There is a good deal in that, Russell; but you must remember that this is a strange country to the generals as well as to us. We haven't even a reliable map to consult, and it won't do for us to run into an ambush, or something like that."

"I wonder if General Aguinaldo is in the field."

"I believe not. He has headquarters at Malolos."

"Then that is where we want to get to. I believe he is the head and front of this rebellion."

"Undoubtedly. Do you know, I pity some of the poor rebels, like those Igorrote spearmen, for instance. They hardly know what they are fighting for, and one of them, who was brought in wounded, said Aguinaldo gave them a position in the advance guard, as a place of honor!"

"If Aguinaldo isn't on his guard, they'll turn on him and kill him," returned another officer, who stood near. "I heard that all the different divisions of the Filipinos were fighting like cats and dogs among themselves."

"That's true," put in another. "I'll tell you what it is, we've got to bring them into submission. If we don't, they'll be fighting among themselves all the time, until the Chinese or Japanese rise up and take them in, land and all. It's the one chance of making a civilized, Christianized nation of them."

It had been decided that the navy should cooperate in the attack northward, and early on Friday morning the monitor *Monadnock* and the cruiser *Charleston* shelled the enemy's territory for half an hour, demolishing a number of buildings and causing a large body of non-combatants to flee for their lives. This attack was also participated in by General MacArthur's artillery, perched on the top of Cemetery Ridge.

"That will wake them up," said Gilbert. "I shouldn't wonder if we get into it soon."

The young Southerner was right. At the end of the half-hour the ships and the artillery stopped

hostilities, and then a solitary gun boomed out three times, at intervals of ten seconds, as a signal for the entire line to advance. Drums rattled and bugles blew, and once more Ben's regiment was in motion, each soldier ready as before to do his utmost.

The first advance, down the hill, was an easy matter. The regiment was well spread out, and each man felt fresh after the rest he had received. So far no shots had been fired, but scarcely had the bottom of the hill been gained, than the Filipinos opened up from several nipa huts and a banana grove, and in a trice the battle waged as fiercely as before.

An open field five hundred feet square is not usually a difficult stretch to cross, but in the face of such a galling fire, the battalion to which Ben belonged found the task hard and perilous.

"We must reach the bamboo fence!" cried Major Morris. "Forward, boys, and make every shot tell!" And the "boys" went forward with a rush and a wild yell. But before the barrier mentioned was gained, several went down, one to rise no more.

The run in the hot sun was exhausting, and at

the fence the battalion paused to catch its breath. Water was at a premium, and officers and men alike suffered. Then came a tumble into a ditch beside the fence, and all were covered with dust and dirt.

The regiment had now gained fair shelter, and from the fence they poured such a hot fire into the banana grove, that the Filipinos slowly retreated. Then the second battalion was ordered ahead, while the first made a detour to the right, and in quarter of an hour the first of the nipa huts was surrounded. It contained nine Filipinos, who were speedily called upon to surrender. They would not at first, but when two were wounded they thought better of it, and throwing down their rifles and bolos, came forth, holding their hands up before them. They were immediately placed under guard and sent to the rear.

Finding that they could not hold their position in the vicinity, the Filipinos retreated in squads and companies, the majority of them along the road leading directly to Caloocan. With this army went a large portion of those who owned the huts, taking with them such of their household effects as they could conveniently carry. In many cases the

huts were burned, and the smoke, mingled with the smoke from thousands of rifles, soon covered road and fields with a heavy pall.

Ben's command passed the grove of bananas to find itself on the edge of an extensive paddy field. Beyond was a fringe of forest, dotted everywhere with the forms of the enemy. A constant firing began the moment the Americans appeared, and all saw that the crossing of this second open field was going to be no easy task.

"We will advance to the first ditch!" cried the captain. "Don't fire until you are down and protected. Double-quick — forward!"

Away they went, leaping the fence of the rice field at a bound. Fortunately there was hardly any water, and beside the irrigating ditch it was quite dry. Down they tumbled, lying flat on the ground, the different companies forming an irregular line several hundred yards long. In this position the soldiers fired at will, taking careful aim over the slight rise of ground before them.

"I wonder how long this is going to last," remarked Ben to Captain Larchmore, as the two came together. "It's tough on the boys to lie in that ditch in this heat."

"That's true, Russell. But it's one of the fortunes of war. If the Fili— There goes the bugle! Company, attention! Forward — to the next ditch!" And away they went for another hundred feet, the men still firing at will. A few of the enemy thought they were going to keep straight on, and began to retreat, but the majority held their ground.

The command was now so close to the jungle that each individual rebel could be seen with ease, and the soldiers picked their targets before firing. This made the battle more hazardous as well as interesting. Strange as it may seem, the closer they got to danger, the less the troops under Uncle Sam seemed to notice it.

"Sure, an' we could wipe 'em out directly!" muttered Casey. "Just lit us go ahead an' we'll show 'em!"

"Yah, let us run dem right off dot island," put in Carl Stummer. "Who vos afraid? Nopotty!" And he started to run, and would have gone ahead alone had not several held him back. Each man was on his mettle and burning to distinguish himself.

At last came a cry from the right of the line.

"The Filipinos are retreating to the road! After them!" The report proved true, and as quickly as it could be done, the regiment was swung around, passing the jungle on the right. As the road was gained the rebels concentrated their fire, and for a moment the onward rush was checked, and some of our men retreated. But only for a moment; then the Americans swept on, and the rebels fled straight to Caloocan and to the hills lying in the direction of Polo, and other points northward.

"On to the town!" was the next cry, and into the city they advanced, the Filipinos contesting every step stubbornly but unsuccessfully. A stand was taken at a church and at several public and private buildings; but the blood of the Americans was now up and they forced the rebels out, in many cases at the point of the bayonet.

Compelled to give up the city, the Filipinos tried their best to burn the main portion of the town, and soon the smaller houses were a mass of flames. An attempt was also made to burn the church and the city hall, but here the Americans interfered, and many of the rebels were caught and taken prisoners. The general advance had begun at one

o'clock in the afternoon. At half-past five Old Glory was swung to the breeze from the flagstaff of the city hall, and rebel sway in Caloocan became a thing of the past. Defeated once more, the Filipinos retreated to Malabon, to Polo, and to other strongholds in the vicinity.

CHAPTER XXVI

A STRANGE MEETING IN MANILA

THE fight had been a hard one, and the regiment to which Ben belonged was glad to rest the next day, camping in the very centre of Caloocan, in what had once been a public park. It was necessary to watch those still in the city, but the bravery of the Americans had had its effect, and the Tagals and their Spanish allies gave but little trouble.

The next day was one full of discomfort for that portion of the Filipino army which had retreated to Malabon. This town, as before described, lies directly on the shore of Manila Bay, and word being sent to the navy, the *Monadnock* and *Charleston* steamed in close and shelled the city and the rebel camps so hotly that the Filipinos were compelled to retreat inland, with the loss of several score of men.

In the meantime our navy was not idle elsewhere. Ilo Ilo is the second seaport of importance in the Philippine Islands, and while the rebels were being

shelled out of Malabon, the *Petrel* and the *Boston* shelled this stronghold. As the rebels fled, some sailors landed, followed by a body of regulars and another of volunteers, and once more the Stars and Stripes swelled proudly to the breeze. The rebels retreated to the village of Jaro, but were dislodged, and then they fled to the mountains.

It was plainly to be seen that the Tagals and those who had taken up arms with them were now desperate. Having been whipped in the open field, so to speak, one of the leading officers of the Tagals issued an extraordinary order to the natives who still remained in Manila, directing an uprising at a certain hour, in which every American and all in sympathy with our cause should be "slain without compassion."

Had this plot not been discovered, its effect might have been truly disastrous, for Manila now contained only such of our soldiers as could be spared from the firing line. But word of the intended massacre was received in time, extra guards were placed upon all streets and in all public places, and one hundred and forty-six persons known to be of rebellious tendencies were arrested. These arrests had a dampening effect, and the massacre did not

take place, the Filipinos determining to wait for a more favorable opportunity.

"Lieutenant Russell, the general wishes to send some one to Manila on a matter of considerable importance," said Captain Larchmore, some days after the fight just described. "All the members of his staff are either away or on the sick list, and I have recommended you for the duty."

"Thank you, captain, I'll be glad of the chance to get into the city again," answered Ben. "When am I to report?"

"At once — if you want to go. There is a flat car to start for town in an hour, and you can ride in state on top," went on Captain Larchmore, with a laugh. The "one-horse" railroad was a constant source of amusement to those who had occasion to use it, yet for transporting supplies it was found very useful.

Brushing up for the occasion, Ben made his way to General MacArthur's headquarters and presented himself. "Captain Larchmore just notified me that you would like me to go to Manila for you, general," he said, after having saluted his superior and also the American flag flying in front of the tent.

"The captain was right, Lieutenant Russell. Can you go immediately?"

"I can, sir."

"If I had a horse handy, you could have it, but as it is, you will have to make the journey on one of the railroad cars. I have an extra horse in Manila, and if you want to do so, you can bring him back for me. Here is a document I wish delivered to General Otis in person, and if you will, you can wait until he can answer it fully. Perhaps he won't be able to give you the reply immediately."

"I'll wait for it, general," answered Ben, and, taking the extended letter, put it in an inside pocket. A few more words passed, and then the young lieutenant hurried for the railroad depot. A detail was busy unloading supplies, and from one of the men he learned that a hand-car was going to start for Manila immediately.

"That will suit me," answered Ben, and, locating the hand-car, he hopped aboard. Five soldiers followed, and soon the car went spinning down the tracks, making very good time, considering the condition of the somewhat torn-up road-bed.

The end of the line reached in Manila, Ben

thanked the men who had "pumped" him to his destination, and hurried in the direction of the governor-general's headquarters, a fine stone building surrounded by stately trees and broad walks. Ascending the steps, he found himself challenged by a guard, who demanded to know what he wanted.

"I have a document which is to be delivered personally," replied the young lieutenant, and explained matters.

It was fully half an hour before he could get into the apartment which Major-General Otis occupied. He found the military governor of the Philippines seated at a broad desk. Beside him sat his secretary, and in a corner sat several influential native citizens who had called to ask for better protection against the rebellious Tagals who were plotting to do them harm.

"Well, lieutenant, what is it?" demanded the general, quickly, but with a pleasant smile.

"A document for you, general," was the answer, and Ben saluted and handed it over. Breaking the seal, the military governor of the Philippines read the paper with interest.

"You may inform your commandant that I will

furnish the information by to-morrow noon," he said, when he had finished. "I can tell him nothing at present."

"Shall I call for the answer at that time? The general said I might remain in Manila for it."

"Very well then, call at noon, and you can take it back with you." Major-General Otis surveyed Ben critically. "How are you boys doing up at Caloocan?"

"Just now we are resting."

"The health of the company is pretty good?"

"We have six on the sick list, sir. The drinking-water and heat seem to affect them more than the fighting."

"Yes, the water is bad, — but that cannot be helped." General Otis paused. "That is all, lieutenant," and Ben felt himself dismissed, and with another salute he walked outside.

"A fine-looking man," he thought, as he hurried away. "And he will make us comfortable if he can." He had heard others say that General Otis was continually asking about the condition of this regiment or that, with the idea of improving matters if they were not as they should be. Sometimes matters went wrong, and certain troops

suffered, but for this the commander-in-chief was not directly responsible.

Feeling that he had the remainder of the day and a good part of the next to himself, the young lieutenant recrossed the Pasig River and took his way to the Tondo district and to the wharves. He knew that the *Olympia* was lying not far off, and he wondered if anybody he knew was on shore.

"Lieutenant Russell, as I'm alive!" came a cry from behind a pile of merchandise on one of the wharves, and knocking the ashes from his pipe, Jack Biddle came forward and offered his hand, which Ben shook warmly.

"Came ashore about an hour ago and was waiting for Larry and some of the others," said Biddle, in reply to Ben's question. "Yes, Larry's as chipper as ever, but we don't like it for a cent that you soldiers are doing all the fighting while we sit and suck our thumbs."

"Some of the ships are hard at work shelling the shore towns."

"Yes, but not the flagship, lieutenant. But perhaps our turn will come. Sit down, and Larry will be along soon," and Ben sat down, there being

nothing better to do. While they waited, the young lieutenant asked what had become of Quartermaster Yarrow.

"He was court-martialled and reduced to the rank of ordinary seaman," answered Jack Biddle. "He isn't on the *Olympia* either, but on one of the smaller ships. I think they're going to send him back to duty on the Pacific coast soon."

"It's a good thing you've got rid of him, Biddle. He was thoroughly bad."

"Right you are, lieutenant. I didn't feel easy all the while he was aboard. He'd be a good one to join the cutthroats who were going to murder all our people in Manila last week."

"That event must have made a lot of excitement here."

"You can bet it did, lieutenant. They sent word over to the ship to be in readiness for a call, but it didn't come. The Oregon and the Minnesota boys collared the leaders before they knew what was happening to them, — and they are in jail yet."

"Yes, but there are more rascals still, Biddle. I was told that the whole city was full of natives who will do almost anything that the leaders at

Malolos dictate. They'll be up to some other vicious trick before long." Ben took a look out into the bay. "Here comes another boatload of sailors now. Is that from your ship?"

"It is. You see to-morrow is Washington's Birthday, and for extra good behavior some of the lads are to get off until nine to-night, while another gang gets off to-morrow afternoon. Larry and I wanted to-morrow, but a jackie must take leave when he can get it."

"The boat isn't coming here."

"So I see. Some of the boats from the other ships landed at a dock two squares below here, and they are heading in the same direction. Come, let us meet them."

They started off, across the dock, to the street beyond. It was now growing dusk, and the electric lights had just been turned on. As they reached the entrance to the second landing-place, a crowd met them and they were compelled to pause.

"Lots of you chaps around here," said a man dressed in civilian's clothes, addressing Ben. "Manila must have more soldiers in it than natives."

"We've got to have a pretty strong guard," answered Ben, pleasantly, and turned to look at

the man. The electric light shone full in his face and he could see the features distinctly. "Great Cæsar!"

It was no wonder that the young lieutenant uttered the exclamation. He recognized the individual on the instant, despite a short beard that was of new growth. The man was Braxton Bogg, the missing cashier, who had wrecked the Hearthstone Savings Institution at home.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CHASE IN THE DARK

"WHAT is the matter?" asked Braxton Bogg, with interest. He was a small, thin man, with a foxy pair of blue eyes, and a nose that had a slight turn-up at the end. It was evident that he did not remember Ben at all, or, at least, did not recognize him in his uniform.

"Braxton Bogg!" ejaculated the youth. "How did you get away out here?"

At the mention of his name, the cashier started back and his face grew full of alarm. But only for an instant. He straightened up immediately and put on a cold front.

"You evidently mistake me for somebody else, officer," he answered calmly.

"Why — er — aren't you Braxton Bogg from Buffalo?" demanded Ben, more astonished than ever, to think that two men might look so much alike.

"Not at all. My name is Carson Hope, and I come from Oakland, California. Is this Braxton Bogg a friend of yours?"

"A friend? Hardly. He wrecked a bank and ran off with something like a hundred and forty thousand dollars of the funds."

"In that case I shouldn't want to know him."

"He was a thorough-paced scoundrel," went on Ben, hardly knowing what to say. If this was not the missing cashier, it must be his ghost.

"Yes, any man who steals is a scoundrel. But I must be getting along, as I have a friend waiting for me." And Braxton Bogg commenced to edge his way out of the crowd.

"Hold on a minute," and Ben caught him by the arm.

"What do you want now?"

"I want to make sure that there is no mistake."

"Do you disbelieve what I have told you?" demanded Bogg, pretending to be very much insulted.

"I know that you and Braxton Bogg look alike as two peas."

"I am not the person—I told you that before. I never heard of him, and as to being a thief, I am a respectable capitalist from Oakland, as I

can easily prove. I came to Manila looking for a good investment — after this trouble now going on is over."

"Did you bring your money with you?"

"Certainly not. Now let go of me, or I shall call the police." And the cashier tried to jerk away, but Ben's hold could not be broken. In the minutes that had passed the youth had been doing some rapid thinking, and had come to the conclusion that it would be best not to let the man out of his sight.

"If I've made a mistake, I'll take the consequences," he said firmly. "As a lieutenant of the United States army I request that you come with me for an examination. Of course as a well-known man of Oakland you must know somebody connected with the California troops stationed here."

"No, I'm not a military man — never took any interest in the war," rejoined Braxton Bogg, telling the truth for once. "I — er — I demand that you let go of me."

"And I, as a United States army officer, demand that you come with me," was Ben's sharp answer. "If everything is straight, you'll not be detained long."

"You won't take my word that everything is all right?" demanded the cashier, sharply, at the same time looking around to see if the coast was clear. The crowd was viewing the landing of the sailors, Biddle with the rest, and nobody was around.

"I will not," answered Ben.

"Then take that," came fiercely, and raising his fist, Braxton Bogg brought it with all force against the young lieutenant's chin.

The attack was so unexpected and so sudden that Ben reeled back and would have fallen had not a nearby fence braced him up. His hold on the cashier relaxed, and in a twinkle Braxton Bogg had broken away and was running up a side street at the best speed his feet could command.

"Hi! what's the row here?" demanded a soldier, who had turned the corner in time to see the blow.

"That man — he is wanted by the authorities of New York — atch him!" panted Ben, and straightened up. His chin had been cut by a diamond ring the cashier wore, but just now he gave no attention to the injury.

"What man?"

"The man who is running up that street. Stop him — or shoot him!"

"Stop, or I'll fire!" roared the guard, recognizing Ben's authority by his shoulder-straps, for the guards in the city were bound to obey any superior officer, no matter from what regiment. He brought his rifle to his shoulder; but before he could take aim Braxton Bogg had darted out of sight between two large warehouses.

As soon as he could recover, Ben made after the vanishing form, and the guard followed. But when the end of his beat was reached the latter stopped, leaving Ben to go on alone. It was rather dark between the warehouses, yet the young lieutenant could hear the patter of the cashier's feet on the stone pavements, and gradually he began to gain on the man.

The chase led into the heart of the Tondo quarter of Manila, the warehouse centre, where millions of dollars' worth of goods were stored and where many of the natives had their homes. Evidently Braxton Bogg did not know how to turn, for presently he found himself in a blind alleyway with tall storehouses on three sides. The lower doors of one of the storehouses were open,

and through these he raced almost out of breath and dripping with perspiration, for the night was a close one.

Ben had kept on gaining, and was less than fifty feet behind when the cashier ran into the warehouse. Drawing his pistol, the young lieutenant prepared to follow. He wished that he had a light, or that there might be a light in the building, whereby he could see what he was doing.

His wish was gratified, but not in the manner that he desired. As he came closer to the doorway he heard a match struck, and in a flash came a bright light, as some straw soaked with oil ignited.

"Hi! what's this mean?" he heard Braxton Bogg exclaim. "Going to burn the place down?"

"Burn! burn! burn!" came the answer, in a wild Tagalese cry. "Down with the vile Americans! Long live the Philippine Republic!" And as Ben reached the doorway he was just in time to see a burly native hit the cashier on the head with a club, flooring him completely.

Ben did not hesitate as to what was his duty in the case before him. His campaign in Cuba, and the present campaign, had taught him the value of acting quickly under certain circumstances. Rais-

ing his pistol, he took aim at the native incendiary and fired.

The report was followed by a yell of pain, and the burly Tagal staggered back, hit in the side. But he was game, and seeing who had fired at him, he leaped upon Ben, just as the young officer fired again. By this time half a dozen other natives appeared, three bearing torches, and all armed with pistols and knives.

The flash from the pistol burnt the Tagal on the bare arm, but the bullet buried itself in the goods in the warehouse. Before Ben could pull the trigger a third time, he was hit on the head and in the back, and he went down bewildered and with a million stars dancing before his eyes.

"The American pig is dead!" cried one of the natives, kicking the form with his bare foot. "Come on! This is our night of victory! We win, or the whole city goes down in ashes!" He led the way out of the alleyway on a run, and his fellows came after, only one lingering, to set fire to another warehouse standing on the street corner.

The roaring of the flames and the terrific heat brought the young lieutenant around as soon as anything. Hardly knowing what he was doing, he

rolled over and got up on his hands and knees. It was a good minute before he could stand upright, and in that space of time the fire gained rapid headway, for the warehouses were as dry as tinder.

"The rascal!" he murmured, and then stared hard at the fire. "What does this mean? Are the natives rising again? It looks like it."

The wind was coming up, and presently a shower of sparks descended upon him, making him realize that if he wished to escape with his life he must run for it. He picked up his pistol and looked into the warehouse into which Braxton Bogg had gone. The cashier was nowhere in sight.

"He ran away — or else he has been burnt up," muttered Ben, and hurried up the alleyway toward the street through which he had passed less than a quarter of an hour before. But now the warehouse on the corner was burning fiercely, and it was filled with barrels of spirits. As Ben approached, there was a dull explosion and the flames burst forth in a dozen directions, completely cutting off his escape.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BURNING OF THE TONDO QUARTER OF MANILA

Ever since American occupation of the Philippines had begun, in August, 1898, those in authority had feared a great conflagration in Manila. The city was thickly populated, many of the buildings were of wood or bamboo, covered with nipa leaves, and closely huddled together, and the public fire department was little better than a name. A great fire in a dry season, therefore, was bound to do immense damage.

The plotters in the city had tried one plan to defeat the Americans and had failed. Now they were determined to try another. They would burn the enemy out or raze the city from end to end. With them it was rule or ruin; no middle course would satisfy them.

The first fire to be started was one in the Santa Cruz district, among a number of houses occupied by residents who had refused to contribute to the

support of General Aguinaldo's forces. A brisk wind swept the flames toward the Escolta, the main business thoroughfare of Manila, and not only the regular fire department, but also the English and German volunteer departments, came out to subdue the flames.

The fire in the Santa Cruz district was well under way when another alarm rang out, this time from the Tondo quarter. It came from a collection of bamboo huts, and spread with the rapidity of lightning as the wind fanned it and carried the sparks onward. This was on the very outskirts, but less than five minutes afterward two more alarms were given, in the heart of the district, and warehouses and costly homes began to go up into smoke, entailing the loss of many hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of property, and imperilling thousands of lives.

In the meantime, the natives were collecting, and those who had rifles formed a company and attacked the Tondo church, where a company of Minnesota volunteers were located. Other natives attacked our soldiers in the streets, and then joined in the general skirmish on the Calle Iris, a broad highway which separates Tondo from the remainder of

Manila. Amid the crackling of the flames, the rattle of musketry, and the frantic efforts of some inhabitants to save their effects, it was as if pandemonium had broken loose, a night of terror which those who took part will not forget as long as they live.

But to none of these calamities did Ben give thought as he backed down into the alleyway, now as hot as a bake oven, and with sparks and burning embers flying in all directions. He was hemmed in — escape appeared impossible. What should he do?

"I must get out somehow!" he murmured. "I must!" His breath came thick and fast, and the injuries to his chin and his back were forgotten. "God help me to make my escape!"

With this prayer he hurried to the extreme rear of the alleyway. Here was one warehouse that seemed as yet to be untouched by the flames. But the doors and the windows were locked, and he could not budge them, although he bore upon them with all the strength that he could muster.

Beside one of the windows was a small wooden ladder, nailed fast to the building and running to the roof. Why it had been put there the young

lieutenant could not tell, but seeing it gave him an idea. Perhaps there might be a ladder on the street side, and he could escape by the roof. "I'll try it, anyway," he murmured. "Anything is better than staying here."

It was no mean task to climb the ladder, with the flames roaring not thirty feet behind him and the sparks falling upon his naked hands and neck as well as his clothing. Once his coat took fire, but he beat the tiny flame out with his palm. Before the top of the warehouse was gained, his neck was blistered in several places.

On high the heat was, of course, worse than below, and now Ben could scarcely draw a safe breath. His brain reeled and he crawled rather than walked to the front edge of the sloping roof.

There was no ladder there, and the distance to the ground was all of thirty-five feet. Below was a pavement of stone. "If I drop, I'll break a leg or something — perhaps my neck," was his dismal conjecture.

As he stood in perplexity he heard a strange hammering on one side of the roof, and presently a scuttle fell back and two men appeared, each struggling with a couple of buckets of water.

"Do you see any fire here?" demanded one, in strong English accents.

"Not a bit of a flame, Joe," was the answer. "But it's as hot as pepper — and more, don't you know," and then the two men came on the roof. They stared at Ben as if he was a spectre, as the weird light reflected his form against the sky.

"Who are you?" demanded the first speaker, and drew a pistol that he carried.

"I am an American officer in trouble," was Ben's frank reply. "I was caught in the alley-way below, and came up the ladder leading to this roof in hope of gaining the street."

"Indeed! Then you've had a narrow escape. Any natives down there?"

"There were some — the fellows who started this fire. They ran away after knocking me over and half stunning me."

"They ought all to be hung!" growled the taller of the Englishmen. "If I was General Otis, I'd order a general court-martial and swing them higher than a kite. You can go down this way if you want to. We are bound to save this warehouse if we can, although we're only watchmen here." And then the pair turned away, to dash out a

little fire that had just caught on one corner of the roof.

Ben needed no second invitation, for he felt that if he remained on the roof much longer he would collapse. Letting himself down through the scuttle, he felt his way along a narrow ladder to the floor below. Here a lantern was burning, and by the rays he made out a stairway leading to a sort of office, where a door opened upon the street.

When the young lieutenant finally gained a place of safety, he found himself hardly able to stand. Staggering to the porch of a deserted house, he fell rather than sat upon the steps.

The glare from the conflagration now made all of Manila as bright as day. From the distance came the constant pop-pop of bamboo joints, as the hot air in them caused them to explode. Occasionally a dull boom told of the fall of some heavy timber or the explosion of an oil barrel, for one of the warehouses was stocked with oil.

"It looks as if Manila were doomed," he thought. "I wonder what I had best do next?"

Then he thought of his brother. Had Larry come ashore, and if so, where was he now?

"He'd be safer on board the *Olympia*," he went on. "But perhaps they have sent some of the seamen ashore, to help fight the flames and the natives." And in this surmise Ben was correct.

"Hi, 'Melican! Wot doee here?" The cry came from a Chinaman who had just staggered into sight, loaded down with the weight of several bundles of household effects.

"I'm about played out and I'm resting. Where are the soldiers? do you know at all?"

"Solyers down dis way. Come, me showee you," and the Celestial started off once more, with the young lieutenant following. It was a narrow street, and soon they found themselves in a perfect jam of people, all crowding forward with bundles, bags, and anything which it was convenient to carry. Groans, yells, and curses sounded on all sides, and many were thrown down to be trampled under foot.

"Down with the Americans!" was the call which reached Ben's ears. "Kill them both!" The words were spoken in Spanish, but the young lieutenant understood enough to make him look in the direction. He beheld two regulars penned in against the side of a building and surrounded by a dozen or more Filipinos of the lowest caste, each armed with

"In a moment the three Americans were in a bunch." — *Page* 279.

a bolo. The guns of the soldiers were probably empty, for they were trying to use their weapons as clubs.

The sight made Ben's heart jump. The soldiers were strangers, but they were Uncle Sam's boys, and that was enough. "Clear the way here, or I will shoot!" he cried, and as one of the natives raised his long knife to stab the soldier nearest to him, Ben fired and hit him in the arm.

"Hurrah, Dick, here are reënforcements!" exclaimed the soldier, joyfully. "Give it to 'em hot!" And as the natives turned to see who had fired on them, the pair swung around with their Remington rifles and laid two of them flat. In a moment more the three Americans were in a bunch, fighting back to back. Ben fired a second and a third time, and becoming scared the natives ran on, to join the crowd which had surged ahead.

"You came in the nick of time, lieutenant," gasped one of the regulars, as both reloaded with all possible rapidity. "I was afraid our last hour had come."

"We had better be getting back to Binondo," put in the other. "Will you go along, lieutenant?"

"You are going to rejoin your company?"

"Yes, if we can find it. I think the boys retreated to the Calle Iris, as they call it."

"Then I'll go with you. We can do nothing by remaining here, and the fire is creeping this way as fast as the breeze can bring it."

"I think I know another side street that is not crowded," continued one of the soldiers. "It was filled up with Chinamen, but they cleared out an hour ago. This way."

He ran off in advance to a cross-lane now thick with flying sparks. The air was dry and scorching, and Ben breathed once more with difficulty. But soon they turned a corner and got in the shelter of a row of buildings which as yet remained untouched.

The Calle Iris was two squares off, and in the distance they could see a company of American soldiers drawn up in skirmish line to keep the native incendiaries and rebels from getting into the Binondo and other districts of Manila. In front of the soldiers was a howling mob of Filipinos, including many women and children. The latter were allowed to pass the line, but the men were being held back until each could be searched, that his weapons and articles for making fire might be taken from him.

As Ben advanced to the line, he saw an American in the crowd. The man had just been allowed to pass the first line of infantry, but the young lieutenant got a good look at his face. The fellow was Braxton Bogg, and no sooner had Ben made the discovery than the cashier disappeared from view.

CHAPTER XXIX

A LETTER FROM JOB DOWLING

"If only I can catch that man!"

Such was Ben's thought as the missing cashier of the Hearthstone Savings Institution disappeared from view. He felt certain that if once he could lay hands on the rascal, the missing bank funds, or a large portion of them, could be recovered, in which case the Russell inheritance would come back to him and his brothers.

But Bogg was gone, and though Ben got through the military lines with all possible swiftness and made a long hunt, nothing more was to be seen of the fellow.

"Ben!" It was a cry from across one of the Binondo streets, and, looking up, the young lieutenant saw Larry in company with Jack Biddle and several other sailors. He immediately joined the party.

"We've been a-hunting for you," said Biddle.

"I told Larry how you slipped from me in the crowd at the dock."

"I went after a man I was anxious to catch," replied Ben. "Who do you suppose it was, Larry?"

"I'm sure I can't guess," returned the young sailor.

"Braxton Bogg."

"The villain who took the bank money?"

"Exactly." And in a few hurried words Ben told his story, to which Larry listened with keen interest. "If only we could lay hands on him," he concluded.

"You haven't any idea where he went to?"

"Not the slightest. But he is in Manila, and we ought to be able to catch him before he has a chance to get out."

"Now he knows he is discovered, he'll keep out of sight or change his appearance. But we can notify the authorities, if this fire doesn't burn down the whole town," continued the young sailor.

"I'll notify the authorities as soon as there is a chance, Larry. There is no use of trying to do anything now."

Ben returned to the Calle Iris, and with him

went Larry and his friends. In one or two places, the fire had now gained the edge of the broad highway, and it looked as if it would leap over into the Binondo quarters. The English and German volunteer fire companies were hard at work, and Ben and the others joined them with a will, carrying hose and the like with the manner of old veterans. It was hard, dirty work, but nobody minded it, although Ben's back had to pay for it the next day, when he found that he could scarcely walk.

It was not until the first streak of dawn that the fire began to subside. In the meanwhile all Manila had been thoroughly policed by the militia; and as day advanced, the excitement simmered down. But the outlying portions of the Tondo quarter were alive with insurgents who, during the conflagration, had crawled into the city through the swamp grass growing on the edge of the bay. It was felt that these rebels must be cleared out, and a battalion of Minnesota volunteers, another of Oregon volunteers, and one from the Twenty-third regular Infantry, started forth to do the work.

It was a running fight for nearly a whole day, first through the burnt and blackened streets of the

Tondo district, then along the dikes and swamps along the north shore. At several places the Filipinos tried to make a stand, but could hold out for a short while only, and at last they took to the water and mud, making for a small peninsula that connects with the mainland at Malabon. The mud was exceedingly pasty, and a number got stuck and were either made prisoners, or were shot down by the gunboat *Callao*, cruising close at hand. Everything in the shape of a hut or house was burned, and the non-combatants were driven back into the city proper.

As soon as quietness was restored in Manila, Ben and Larry went around to the various police headquarters and left word concerning Braxton Bogg. Those in authority made a note of the case, and promised to do what they could toward capturing the absconder.

"We will watch the ships that go out," said the official having authority at the docks. "Then if he leaves Manila at all, he will have to go into the rebel lines, and it's not likely that he will care to do that."

"Not unless he joins them," answered Ben. "He's rascal enough for anything, in my opinion."

Larry had now to return to his ship, and after a warm handshake the brothers separated. "I want to see active service," said the young sailor. "If the *Olympia* doesn't do something soon, I'm going to try to get a temporary transfer to one of the other warships."

At noon precisely Ben presented himself at Major-General Otis's headquarters. He found the military governor more busy than ever, but the document for which he had come was ready for him, and inside of half an hour the young lieutenant was again on his way to the front, this time astride of the horse his commander had told him he might bring along.

The ride was a pleasant one, full of scenes of interest, for the natives were now coming back to their abandoned homes in that neighborhood, feeling that so long as the Americans held Caloocan and Manila they were safe, providing they did not take up arms against the United States. Children were plentiful, and large crowds of them gathered around wherever the soldiers were at work, picking up all articles cast aside and lugging them home. The majority of the natives were women, the men being elsewhere — probably in the ranks of the insurgents.

Having delivered the document entrusted to him,

Ben returned to his position as acting first lieutenant of Company D. All the men were glad to see him, and the story of the Tondo conflagration had to be told over and over again. The young officer was so stiff he could scarcely rise after sitting, and he was glad enough that the run of events gave him a week and more of nearly perfect rest.

The attempt to loot and burn Manila having failed, the Filipinos were non-plussed concerning the next movement to make. They had experienced a rude awakening in their contests with the American troops. While fighting the Spaniards they had been used to night skirmishes amounting to little; the bold, forward advances of the Americans nearly paralyzed them. They sought delay by negotiations, and in the meantime tried to strengthen their position at Malabon and at Polo, feeling that under no circumstances must the Americans be allowed to approach Malolos, their capital.

For some weeks after the taking of Caloocan the operations on both sides were of a minor character. Here and there a band of insurgents would try to advance, only to be driven back further than ever into the jungles and mountains. The greatest

fighting was along the Pasig River, and to the southeast, in the vicinity of Laguna de Bay. On March the 15th, a portion of General Wheaton's command came along the river, defeated the rebels, and took the village of Pasig, while the Fourth Regular Cavalry, aided by some volunteers, captured the village of Pateros, on the shore of the bay just named. The fighting continued day after day with varying success, the Americans steadily advancing toward the water front.

For many months some of the Filipinos had been in favor of submitting to American control. But General Aguinaldo would not hear of it, and when General Lagarda, a Spaniard, went to him and suggested it, Aguinaldo ordered him beheaded, and the order was promptly executed. But a peace commission from the United States had arrived at Manila, and these gentlemen succeeded in conferring with native leaders who were less headstrong. Yet the conferences at that time were of little practical value, so far as they went to stop the fighting. Absolute independence was what the Filipinos wanted, and they said that they would take nothing less.

"This is going to be a long-drawn campaign," remarked Gilbert to Ben one day, as both took it

easy under the shade of a large plantain. "If we could only get these rebels into a solid fight once, we might finish them. But as soon as they get bitten, they run, and we can't do much with them in the mountains and the jungle."

"I think they are playing a waiting game, Gilbert. The report from home is that they are trying to stir up Congress to grant them independence. Take it all in all, they are so rattled they don't know what to do."

"They may be waiting for the rainy season. We can't do much when it once starts in to pour."

"Perhaps we can, — by cutting off their supplies. Many an army has been starved into a surrender."

"Well, I wish something would happen. I hate this lying around in the heat. It takes all the nerve out of a fellow."

"They tell me the natives are leaving Malabon. The gunboats worry them constantly. I think they expect to make a grand stand at Malolos."

"It would be natural, as that is their capital. By the way, have you heard anything further of Braxton Bogg?"

"Not a word. If he is in Manila, he is keeping very quiet."

"Perhaps he has sailed away."

"I don't see how he could get on a ship without being detected. The shore watch is a very strict one, you know, and everybody coming and going has to give a full account of himself. If we — What's that cry?"

"Mail! mail!" came the call, and both leaped up, to run to the tent where a bagful of papers and letters was being distributed. Gilbert had a bundle of newspapers and one letter from a distant relative, and there were two letters for Ben.

"From Walter and Uncle Job," murmured the young lieutenant, as he surveyed the envelopes. "I'll find out what Walter is doing first," and he slit open the communication.

"I am on the deep blue sea once more," wrote his brother. "But not for battle this time, but for glory. The Atlantic Squadron is bound southward, to visit Jamaica and I don't know how many other ports. We expect gay times, I can tell you that.

"I suppose you and Larry are hard at it. I read the newspapers with interest, and when I heard how you had assisted in fighting the Filipinos when they attacked Manila, I just had to dance

a jig for joy. That's right, Ben, old boy, keep it up, and make those Tagals good United States citizens."

There was much more, in the same strain, and before the young lieutenant had finished reading he burst out laughing. "That's Walter all over," he murmured. "I do hope he has a jolly time, for he deserves it. Now to see what Uncle Job has to say." And he began with difficulty on the second communication, for Job Dowling wrote a heavy, twisted hand, exceedingly difficult to decipher.

"I reckon you are having lots of trouble with them natives, Ben," wrote the old man, after telling that he was well. "But I can tell you that I am having my troubles, too. That bank busting up, left me with hardly any cash, and mortgages are mighty hard to raise these times—had to pay full six per cent, instead of five, as I had calculated on, and gave a bonus besides. The bank thinks to pay the depositors ten per cent in about six or eight months. That is better than nothing, of course, but I won't be well off, and you and your brothers won't be, neither. There is some talk of going to

the grand jury and having the directors of the concern indicted, but that won't bring back the cash.

"The detectives tracked Braxton Bogg to San Francisco, but there they lost him, and, although they watched all the railroad depots and steamship lines, they couldn't track him any more. The bank president has offered a thousand dollars out of his own pocket for Bogg's arrest; but I don't believe that anybody will ever earn the reward — Braxton Bogg is too slick for them."

CHAPTER XXX

FIGHTING AT POLO AND NOVALICHES

"I'd like to earn that thousand dollars," said Ben to Gilbert, after the two had exchanged news.

"If I were you, Ben, I'd let the authorities in Manila know about that reward. It may put them on their mettle to catch the cashier."

"That's so; I'll do it at once!" cried the young lieutenant, and a note to the provost-marshal was penned on the spot and sent into the city at the first opportunity.

A general reorganization of the regular and volunteer forces in the island was in progress, under the directions of General Lawton, who had arrived shortly before, with reënforcements. The rainy season was not far off, and it was realized that if the Americans wanted to gain more ground, a vigorous forward movement must be instituted without further delay.

"We strike tents to-day!" said Captain Larch-

more to Ben, on the morning of March the twenty-fourth. "I imagine it will be some time before we put them up again."

"The news just suits me," answered the acting first lieutenant, and he set about giving necessary orders. Soon one after another of the whitish-brown shelters came down, to be rolled up and tucked away in one of the wagons of the baggage-train.

"Sure, an' I'm glad we don't have to carry thim," observed Dan Casey. "That job nearly broke me back in Cuby."

From a distance came a steady firing, showing that what few of the rebels were left in Malabon and other points along the coast were being driven out. The Filipinos were now concentrated at Polo, with a portion of their troops at Novaliches, a town a little farther eastward.

By noon Ben's regiment was ready to advance, but the orders did not come. "Maype ve ton't do noddings anyhow," grumbled Stummer. "Oh, put I vos sick of vaitin' so long!"

Early the following morning, however, the drums rattled and the bugles sounded the command, "Forward!" A cheer went up, which

speedily grew into a yell, and the men who had lain in the intrenchments so long leaped up with alacrity. "On to Polo! Come ahead!" was the cry, and soon regiment after regiment was in motion, until the various roads, the open plains, and the jungle itself seemed to be alive with uniforms and rifles. All were full of hope, and the sight was a most inspiring one.

The general plan of battle was for a portion of the American troops to swing toward Novaliches on the right, and then to try to strike north of Polo, thus hemming the rebels in and cutting them off from a retreat to Malolos. At the same time another portion of our army was to make a demonstration near the Pasig River, thus preventing the Filipinos in the north from obtaining reënforcements from the east and southeast.

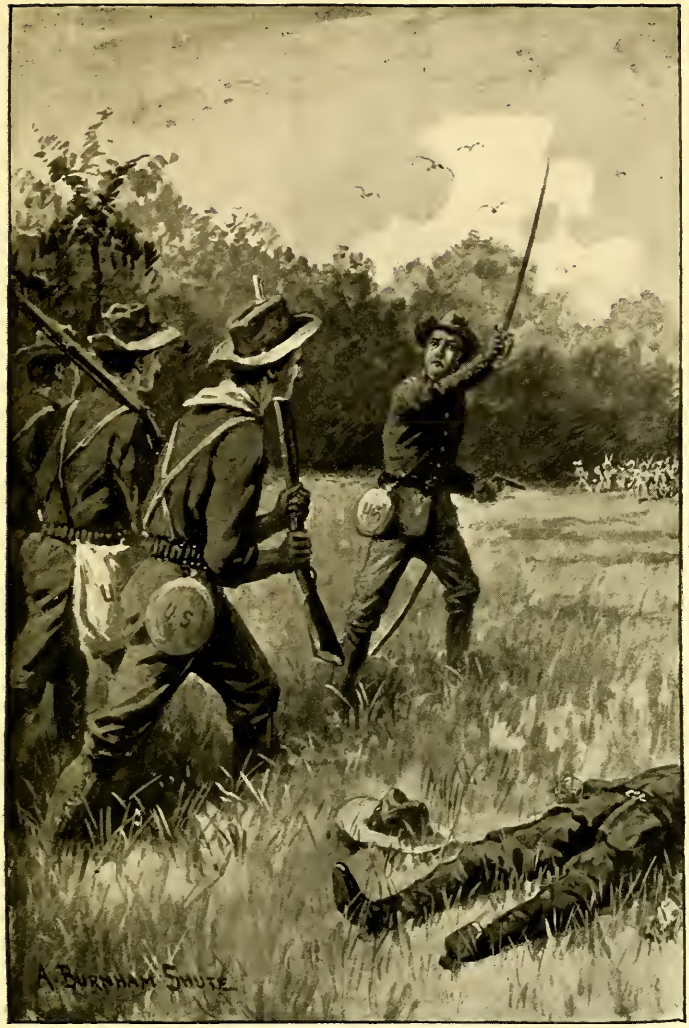
The advance developed a hot fire at once, showing that the rebels were on the alert, and the battle had not waged fifteen minutes before the Chinese litter-carriers, hired for that purpose, were hurrying to the rear with the dead and the dying. In the immediate vicinity of Caloocan the fighting was terrific, many of the insurgents rushing forward in the face of a hot fire, in a vain attempt to

wrench the American soldiers' weapons from their grasp.

As the regiment to which Ben's company belonged had to advance across an open field, a skirmish formation was employed. At first every fifth man advanced five yards, then, as the first line made another advance, the second man of every five came up, and so on, until the whole regiment was spread out like the trees in a newly planted orchard. The men would crouch and run, and then lie flat, taking shelter behind anything which was handy. And all this while there was a steady crack! crack! as the men fired at will on the enemy, who could be seen over the top of a slight rise of ground.

"We'll have their first trench soon, boys!" shouted Captain Larchmore. "Come on!" And he waved his sword for another advance. Soon they were going up the rise, in the face of a storm of bullets which laid many a poor soldier low. The trench was gained, when Captain Larchmore was seen to throw up his arms and fall headlong. Instantly Ben ran to his superior's side and bent over him.

"Captain, are you seriously hurt? Where did



"Stand firm, boys!" he shouted. — *Page* 297.

the bullet hit you?" he asked. But no reply came back, and, turning the body over, he saw that his commander had been struck in the temple and was stone dead.

The revelation came as a great shock, and for a moment the young volunteer was speechless. He turned to another soldier, the first sergeant, who had been acting as second lieutenant. "Dead," he muttered hoarsely.

"Dead?" ejaculated the sergeant. "You are certain?" He knelt down. "You're right. Shall I tell the major?"

"Yes, but hurry up, for we—"

"The rebels are coming!" came from in front of the intrenchment. "They are down on us for keeps this time!" And then the line began to waver as if some contemplated a retreat.

Ben's blood went surging through his veins at breakneck speed. His captain was dead—the company was without a commander—no, *he* was now the commander. He leaped forward, sword in hand.

"Stand firm, boys!" he shouted. "Don't give them an inch! See, the rest of the regiment is going ahead. Come on!" And he jumped to the front, waving his sword on high.

"Hurrah for Lieutenant Russell!" came from the ranks. "All right, we're coming!"

"Dis is vot I like!" came in Stummer's voice. "Down you go, you repel!" And he pulled trigger point blank at an insurgent who was about to fire on him. Both missed their mark, and on the instant a fierce hand to hand struggle ensued. But the German volunteer got the better of it, and pressed on, leaving the native behind with a broken wrist.

The battle was now on in all of its fierceness, the rebels being driven wild by the loss of their first intrenchments. As the Americans pressed on, one of the Filipinos, who were fighting Company B, rushed to a hollow with a lighted torch in his hand. Gilbert saw the fellow and ran after him.

"Hold on there! What are you up to?" demanded the Southerner.

"Bad *Americanos!*" came back the answer. "They shall die!"

"Take that for your trickery!" was Gilbert's return, and he fired. At the same time four other soldiers fired on the native, and he went down with his torch under him. When the party of five looked into a nearby hole in the ground they

found a train of powder leading to more powder and a bundle of dynamite sticks. The rascal had calculated to blow up all the American soldiers within a hundred feet of his mine.

Ben had his hands full in keeping his company together, for the ground was now much broken and they were inclined to split to the right and the left. But Sergeant Gilmore, acting as first lieutenant, helped him greatly, and Company D forced its way along to the next intrenchment, in advance of all of the rest of the regiment. But now the hand to hand encounter was renewed, and in a trice Ben found himself face to face with a native captain, a heavy-set fellow, of pure Tagal blood, who was swinging a sword that was nearly twice as heavy as his own.

There was no time for words, and the Tagal sprang upon Ben with the evident intention of killing him at a blow. Around came the shining blade, to hit against the young lieutenant's with such force that the sparks flew in all directions.

Ben was almost thrown off his feet by the weight of the onslaught, but he recovered as quickly as did the Filipino and made a thrust forward, which his opponent parried. Then began a regular set-to,

the swords click-clacking with the rapidity of a telegraph sounder.

"Aha!" hissed the Filipino, and by a rapid lunge he managed to prick Ben in the side. But the young lieutenant leaped back in time to avoid serious injury, and returned the thrust with interest, inflicting a deep wound in the shoulder. Then the tide of battle separated the pair; and that was the last Ben ever saw of his opponent.

Beyond the second line of intrenchments was a jungle, and the Tagals now retreated into this, firing as they went. They fully expected that the Americans would stop the pursuit here, it being well along in the afternoon; but they were mistaken, and before they could recover from their surprise Uncle Sam's troops were on them, keeping so close that anything in the way of an ambush was out of the question. The jungle led down hill, to a small stream, and away went the natives pell-mell, one badly disorganized company after another. As the stream was shallow, they forded it without difficulty and came to a halt at some old intrenchments thrown up during their rebellion against Spain.

The day had been hot, the men had had little

or nothing to eat and drink, and everybody was about ready to "cave in," as Gilbert expressed it. Under the circumstances it was deemed advisable to encamp for the night in the brush overlooking the stream. Accordingly a strong picket line was thrown out, and in addition the sharpshooters went to the front, to guard against Filipino treachery. In the gathering darkness the soldiers threw themselves on the earth and ate and drank in silence, while the surgeons of the various regiments went around, looking for the wounded and dying, and calling out softly, that nobody needing their aid might be missed. It was after ten o'clock ere the wagon train came up, to find most of the men sleeping soundly.

At daybreak fresh ammunition was served out and a hurried breakfast was had. It was Sunday, and the chaplain of the regiment took the occasion to go among the men and remind them that this might be their last day upon earth, and begged of them to be prepared should grim Death suddenly overtake them. A brief prayer followed, and a loud amen at the conclusion showed how those who had heard had taken the words to heart. "I can tell you, those times made a man

think of his future state," was what Ben said afterward.

The nature of the ground covered had prevented a position north of Polo being gained, but the rebels were afraid of being cut off, and now began a gradual movement toward Malolos, one wing leaving Novaliches and the other abandoning Malabon and the fishing villages immediately above it. This brought all close to the Polo territory, an uncertain piece of ground, hilly, boggy, covered with rocks and jungle, and with many small streams, the bridges of which had been either torn away or burnt. And what was to the Americans' disadvantage, the whole territory was new ground to them, while the natives knew every foot they were covering.

Scarcely had the chaplain of the regiment finished when the advance was sounded. A detail had examined the stream during the darkest hours of the night and found several excellent fording places, and company after company crossed with a wetting only to the knees. At this time the rebels opened up only a scattering fire.

"They are retreating," said Ben, and he was right. The rebel general-in-chief, Luna, had

ordered that division of his army to wheel in toward Polo, to reënforce the troops fighting some of General Wheaton's men. Only a few of the rebels were met with, and by a little strategy these were surrounded, and twenty-nine of them were made prisoners, with the loss of only one man wounded.

CHAPTER XXXI

"ON TO MALOLOS!"

THE fighting all through Sunday was heavy but scattering, the natives concentrating first at one stronghold and then another. At Novaliches the town was burnt by both Americans and Filipinos, and the many huts and houses along the side roads were treated in the same fashion. At Polo the Tagal sharpshooters gathered at a church and in the upper windows of two houses, and the death list of the Americans was swelled considerably before they were discovered. Several of the sharpshooters were captured, and it was reported that they had been using poisoned bullets, but this was quickly proved to be untrue. While the report was circulating, however, the prisoners were in great danger of being lynched, for poisoned bullets are against the rules of modern warfare.

When Ben's company reached Polo, along with the rest of the regiment, the Filipinos were taking

their last stand in the rear of a plantation, where several long, low buildings offered a fair protection. The first battalion was sent forward to "clean out that nest," as the command came, and went forward on the double-quick. But the Filipinos had had enough of the contest for the time being, and as the four companies came closer, they ran off with a yell, to join the larger portion of their army, which was now fleeing for Marilao, a village lying on the road to Malolos and but a short distance beyond Polo.

"On to Malolos!" was the cry which was taken up by the Americans. "Let us push on straight ahead to the rebel capital!" The cry swept throughout the whole army, inspiring the men, and dusty, hot, and worn out as they were, they surged forward, until in the evening MacArthur's troops rested between Marilao and Meicauayan, a small settlement two miles north of Polo. It was found that the whole of the roads and the open fields were intrenched, but the rebels had been driven from one shelter to the next, and were now almost out of sight.

The bridges having been destroyed, many of the baggage wagons could not get through, and provisions were slow in arriving. The rebel general,

Luna, now issued an order that all places that were abandoned should be burned, and consequently the whole countryside was bright with flames, which in some instances communicated with the jungle, producing heavy forest fires, and still further impeding the advance of the Americans. Yet the bridges were mended, the baggage trains came through as best they could, along with the artillery, and the troops went on through the heat, dust, and smoke, suffering as only those can suffer who are not used to a tropical climate. Hundreds fell by the way, overcome either by the sun or by tropical complaints, and soon the hospitals at Manila and elsewhere filled to overflowing.

"We will wear them out," General Aguinaldo is reported to have said grimly. "We can stand it if they cannot. Only let us keep them at it until the wet season arrives." But as the Americans came closer to Malolos, he packed up his things and prepared to flee at a moment's notice.

"This campaign beats anything I ever dreamed of," said Gilbert. "Why, my canteen is empty all the time, and even ditch water tastes good when a fellow's mouth is full of cotton. And yet the doctors tell us to drink as little as we can."

"I allow myself to go dry as much as possible," answered Ben. "I understand that is what the British soldiers in India do. They tell me that the natives here drink little or nothing."

"And I guess they live on nothing, too," growled the sergeant of Company B. "So far I haven't picked up a mouthful worth eating."

At this Ben laughed outright. "You shall dine with me to-night, Gilbert," he said. "My boys brought me a chicken just now, — Stummer and Casey raked up half a dozen, — and the cooks have promised me some real banana flour biscuits. Now don't tell the others, or they may get jealous."

Gilbert promised to remain silent, and that night Ben and his chum ate the best meal they had tasted for six weeks. But the young Southerner had been right; the natives had cleaned out almost everything in sight.

And yet the nights in camp were not without their diversion. Somebody always had a good story to tell of what had happened during the day, — either comic or tragic, — and occasionally somebody would sing, if he wasn't too dry to raise his voice, and the others weren't too tired to listen. One song in particular became quite popular. It was sung to

the tune of "Marching through Georgia," and two of the lines ran thus: —

> "We're marching on to Malolos from Manila by the sea!
> Marching on to Malolos!"

In two days the regiment made an advance of three miles more. During this time a violent storm was encountered, and officers and privates were drenched to the skin. But as it was a little cooler afterward, everybody was glad that it had rained.

It was during the worst of the shower that Ben's company took temporary shelter in an abandoned house by the roadside. The house had been used as a rebel headquarters, and on the table still lay the sheets of paper and pen and ink the rebel commander had left behind him in his flight. On one of the sheets were scrawled a lot of figures, and on another several sentences in Spanish. Then Ben took up a third sheet, and found lying under it an empty envelope, on the back of which were several columns of figures, marked at the top with the dollar sign, the leading sum being $124,000.

"Humph! somebody has been figuring in American money," he mused, and turned the envelope carelessly over. Then he stood spellbound, for the

envelope was one that had been used. It was stamped and postmarked Buffalo, New York, and was addressed to Braxton Bogg, Esq., Cashier Hearthstone Savings Institution, City.

"My gracious, can it be possible that he was here?" burst from the acting captain's lips. "It must be. But if he was here, he must have joined the insurgents, — or else he was their prisoner." He studied the envelope again. "One hundred and twenty-four thousand dollars, eh? Can it be that that is what he has saved out of the hundred and forty that were missing?"

The discovery excited Ben not a little, and he told his lieutenants and several others of it, describing Braxton Bogg as closely as he could. "Remember, there is a reward of one thousand dollars for the capture of the rascal," he concluded. He was in great hopes that the regiment would move on immediately, but no further advance was made until the following morning.

At sunrise the troops under General MacArthur were again in motion, moving toward the small village of Bocave. In the neighborhood of the railroad the fighting continued as heavy as before, and it was discovered that the Filipinos had torn

up the track and destroyed a portion of the bridge. One stand was taken by the rebels and then they fled to Bigaa, the next town.

By this time the thermometer was at ninety in the shade, and it wanted yet an hour to noon. At least forty soldiers had dropped out, overcome by their exertions and as many more had been killed or wounded. But the cry was still "On to Malolos!"

"Sure, an' we kin rist in Aguinaldo's palace whin we git there," remarked Casey. "It's a feather bed ye'll be afther havin', Stummer."

"A fedder ped!" snorted the German volunteer. "Not py dis climate, Dan, — I vos radder haf an ice pox alretty. Of you find Carl Stummer missing, look for a grease sphot on der road — dot's me." And a short laugh went up.

From Bigaa the army pushed on along the railroad valley toward Guiguinto, a place of considerable importance, three and a half miles southeast of Malolos. By the middle of the afternoon they had reached a small stream within sight of the town. Here, as usual, both the railroad and the foot bridges were gone. It was seen that the Filipinos had taken up a strong position near the

railroad station, and no sooner did the Americans appear than they were given a warm reception.

As before, the Engineering Corps was again called to the front, and went to work in the face of a storm of bullets, to fix up the railroad bridge which was the less damaged of the two structures. The task progressed rapidly, and inside of half an hour the bridge was so far mended that a battalion of infantry was able to leap across it, others having in the meantime taken to the water at several fording spots which were hunted up. Then the artillery came over the bridge, drawn by the soldiers, the mules being made to swim the stream.

As soon as the field-pieces could be drawn to a commanding point a rapid fire was poured into the rebels' position, and at the same time the infantry made a concerted rush all along the line, which measured half a mile or more. Down went Ben's company into a hollow and across the stream, and then up the other side, each man perspiring freely, puffing like a porpoise, and firing as rapidly as he could load and sight his weapon.

"You are doing nobly, boys!" cried the young commander. "Keep it up, and we'll be the first into the capital. Remember, we have less than

four miles more to go! Drive them out of their trenches! Now then, all together!" And away went the command, other companies following. Musketry rattled, the field-pieces boomed out, the soldiers cheered and yelled, and the Stars and Stripes went waving lustily down the whole line. Before such an inspiring advance, nothing could hold out, and as the Americans came closer, one after another of the rebel companies fell back, doggedly and full of rage. As they passed through Guiguinto the ever present torch was called into use, and many buildings were razed. The railroad station, however, was saved, along with some rolling stock which had found its way down the tracks from the upper end of the road.

"One more day's fighting and we'll be in the rebel capital," said Ben to Gilbert, when they met that evening, after a hasty supper. "I wonder what General Aguinaldo thinks of the war now?"

"I reckon he thinks things are all against him," responded the Southerner. "The loss of his capital will be a serious blow to him, not because he wants the town, but because it will show all of the natives that their leader is not as powerful as he claims to be. So far a good many of the

Filipinos living at a distance have imagined that they were winning instead of losing. I saw one of their newspapers yesterday in which it spoke of their glorious victory at Manila and along the Pasig."

"They are badly whipped, Gilbert, if they will only believe it. A few more hot fights, and all they will be able to do will be to take to the mountains and carry on a guerilla warfare."

"The better class won't countenance that, Ben. I think that before long they'll sue for peace, and sue mighty hard, too."

"I hope so. A campaign out here isn't all fun — even if a fellow is acting captain. By the way, I see you are acting first lieutenant of your company."

"Yes; poor Andery and Dilks were both shot. I'm thinking I'm a pretty lucky fellow to escape."

"That is what I am thinking of myself," answered the acting captain of Company D. "With our fellows falling all around us, there is no telling who will be next. I sincerely trust it isn't I," he concluded, little dreaming of what the battle of the morrow had in store for him.

Poor Stummer had been wounded, but how

badly Ben did not know. As soon as he was able he hunted up the regimental surgeon and requested the particulars.

"He has been shot in the shoulder," answered Surgeon Fallox. "It is rather an ugly wound, but by no means dangerous."

"And how is Carl resting?"

"Oh, he's a hero, that German, and bears up finely. When I bound up the wound he set his teeth and didn't utter a single groan. When I was leaving him he called after me: 'Docthor, tell dem dot I ain't dead yet, und as soon as I gits me up ag'in I vos fight twist so hard as efer vos!'"

"And how long do you suppose he'll be in the hospital?"

"That will depend entirely upon his constitution and how the heat affects him. Some of the wounded ones go into a high fever out here."

"Oh, keep him out of a fever if you can," cried Ben. "Do your best for the poor chap. We can't afford to lose such a good man."

"I'll certainly do all I possibly can," said the surgeon.

There was but little sleep in camp that night. Although all were tired out, each man was think-

ing of how close they were to the goal for which they had been striving, and wondering what the events of the next day would bring forth.

"It's been a tough week for the boys," said Major Morris to the acting captain. "They have fought almost constantly, and jungle work in such a climate is simply killing. I trust if we do get into the rebel capital that we get a good rest afterward."

"I'm afraid we'll have to open a hospital there, major. More than a fifth of the army is on the sick list, so I understand."

"The trouble is, the boys don't know how to take care of themselves. For instance, three of the men of Company A got hungry and filled up on green bananas and half-ripe cocoanuts. Now they are doubled up with cramps, and they won't be fit for duty for three or four days. But I must acknowledge I feel weak myself, and I am very careful of what I touch."

At that moment an orderly dashed up. "The general wishes to see you at once," he said, addressing the commander of the first battalion. "He has some private work he wishes you and some officer of your selection to undertake."

"If that's the case, you had better come with me, Russell," replied the major, and both hurried to the general's headquarters.

The mission to be undertaken was soon explained. Scouts were scarce, and as the major had formerly acted in that capacity, the general wished him to go out and reconnoitre the immediate front. In less than ten minutes the major was off, with Ben at his side.

It was a dark night, but few stars showing, and it was with some difficulty that they proceeded. They were halted at their own picket line, but soon explained matters and were allowed to proceed.

"There is a slight hollow to our left, captain," whispered the major, when they had advanced about fifty yards. "I think we had better take to that, eh?"

"I agree, major. And I guess we had better stop talking from now on."

"Right you are. If it comes to the pinch we'll let our pistols do the barking," concluded the commander of the first battalion.

In a minute more the hollow was gained, a little gully running north and south. They knew that

the Filipino pickets must be ahead, although how far off they could not tell. They had proceeded less than two hundred feet when a cracking sound in the brush ahead brought them both to a sudden halt.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE CAPTURE OF THE REBEL CAPITAL— CONCLUSION

To Ben the noise ahead sounded as if some person had stepped upon a dry branch of a tree. He clutched the major's arm, and both stood like statues, and strained their ears.

The sound was not repeated, but a slight click took its place, showing that some one had pulled back the hammer of a rifle or pistol.

"We've run into somebody," whispered the major into Ben's ear. "Will you go on with me?"

"If you say so," was the faint reply. "But take care, or you'll be a corpse in another second."

Dropping down in the tall grass, they advanced slowly and painfully to where a rock arose, overlooking some bushes, with a jungle of trees and vines beyond. At the rock they paused again to listen.

Suddenly Major Morris pulled Ben's wrist, and

pointed to their right. There in the gloom they could barely distinguish the form of a Tagal who sat on a fallen tree trunk, with his long Mauser resting on his half-bare knees, for his dirty uniform was in tatters. They both concluded that the Tagal was gazing in their direction, and dropped out of sight immediately.

"Did he see us?" whispered Ben.

"I don't know. It is darker here than over there. He must be one of their pickets. Come, let us crawl off in the opposite direction."

"But if he saw us, he'll give the alarm."

"We'll have to risk that," returned the major of the first battalion.

He advanced slowly, and Ben brought up in the rear. Once or twice he looked back, but the sentry had not changed his position. In five minutes more they were close to the Filipino encampment.

It lay in another hollow, and to the west was a small hill, where two field-pieces had been planted. "That is what I wanted to find out about," said the major, pointing to the guns. "Now we'll look around, and see how many more they have in this vicinity. If you'll go up that little watercourse, I'll go down, and we can come together again in,

say, half an hour. To separate in that fashion will save time, and that is what the general wants us to do."

"I'm willing," answered the acting captain of Company D, and in a moment he was alone, picking his way in the darkness with only the calls of the night-birds to disturb him.

The young volunteer felt that he must have his wits about him. He was in the enemy's country and acting as a spy. Discovery, therefore, would mean death, and he felt sure that the Filipinos would not be long in carrying out such a sentence. "If it comes to discovery, I'll sell my life as dearly as possible," was his grim thought.

The watercourse wound northward, and Ben began to climb a slight knoll. Here the trees were set out in more or less of a regular fashion and the underbrush was all cleared away, showing that it was part of a well-kept plantation. A light caught his eye, gleaming from a window but a short distance away.

Prompted by curiosity, Ben advanced toward the light, to discover a long, low farmhouse, surrounded by several outbuildings including a large rice barn. The house was dark save for the single

light that came from a large sitting room to the front.

"I must be outside of the rebel encampment now," he thought, as he looked around in vain for pickets or Filipino soldiers. "I wonder who is in the house."

He approached with caution until he was less than ten steps from the lighted opening. He could now see into the room with ease, and the sight which met his gaze filled him with astonishment.

Seated at the centre table in the room were two men, the one a small, thin individual dressed in the uniform of a general in the Filipino army. The other man was Braxton Bogg.

"My gracious, I've tracked him at last!" burst from the young volunteer's lips. "I wonder what he is up to."

The Filipino general and the cashier were conversing in such low tones that Ben was able to catch only an occasional word. The conversation was in English, and the acting captain of Company D drew closer that he might take in all that was being said.

"It is your one chance," the Tagal was saying. "You can accept it, or not, as you choose."

"But it isn't fair — it is downright robbery!" came from Braxton Bogg, with almost a groan. "How do I know that your bonds will be worth anything?"

"I can give you my word for that, señor. You need not be afraid of the investment."

"It's robbery, I say. If I don't invest you will treat me as a spy and shoot me, and then take the money anyway. It is no way in which to act toward a gentleman who is willing to throw in his fortunes with you."

"We need the money — the Filipino cause is a grand one — you should not object. Tell me where the money is hidden in Manila, and if our secret emissaries can get it, all will go well with you, and I will see that you are raised to the honor of a captaincy on General Aguinaldo's private staff."

"I will tell you nothing. I have had enough of this sort of thing. I'm going to get out."

As Braxton Bogg spoke he sprang up and ran for the doorway. In an instant the Filipino leaped upon him, drawing a bolo as he did so. The sight of the weapon made the cashier shiver, and even Ben's heart gave a sudden jump. But then came an unexpected shot, and the rebel fell back, hit

in the chest. From his position on the floor, Bogg had fired, and by good luck his aim had proved fatal. In a moment more the cashier was flying from the house and in the direction of the grove of trees through which Ben had just picked his way.

Without waiting to think of consequences, the young volunteer followed the man, under the trees and straight for the watercourse previously described. From a distance came an alarm, and both of the Americans knew that the rebel camp would soon be astir from end to end.

As long as Braxton Bogg kept running in the direction of the home picket line, Ben was willing to let him run. "I hope he goes straight through," he murmured. "Won't he be surprised when I confront him."

"*Alto!*" came the sudden cry, and a Filipino guard sprang up from behind some brush. But Braxton Bogg only ran the faster. The guard took steady aim and let drive. A yell of pain told that the cashier had been struck, but he still kept on his course.

Ben had to pass the same picket, and the fellow was reloading with all possible speed. "*Alto!*"

came the command again, but now Ben fired before the rebel could get a second shot. "*Americano!*" screamed the guard and fell flat, struck in the knee.

The entire camp was now aroused, and the pickets on both sides began to shoot. Bogg was still running, and he covered the ground so rapidly that Ben had all he could do to keep him in sight. Soon the man reached an American picket, who brought him to a standstill at the point of the bayonet.

"I am an American — I just escaped from the rebels!" gasped Bogg, and it can truthfully be said that he was ready to drop. "Take me to your general if you don't believe me."

"All right," was the reply. "Corporal of the guard; number seven!" added the picket, in a loud voice, and the cry went down the line to the guard tent. As the corporal came running up, so did Ben.

"Why, this is Captain Russell!" cried the corporal.

"I stopped the other man first," explained the picket. "He said he just escaped from the rebel camp."

"So I did. I want to get to a safe place — out of the reach of those dirty rascals," said Braxton Bogg, who had not noted the corporal's words. "I — I am an American citizen and I demand protection."

"All right, Mr. Bogg, we'll give you all the protection you require," put in Ben, coldly, and caught the rascal by the arm. "I'll take charge of this man, corporal. He is wanted by the United States authorities for embezzlement."

"What, you!" gasped the cashier, and his face fell all in an instant. "Why — er — how's this?" he stammered.

"You just come with me and I'll show you how it is," answered Ben, and marched the man off without further ado, the corporal of the guard following, to learn what it all meant.

At the guard tent the situation was explained, and Braxton Bogg was placed under arrest. It was found that the shot from the rebel picket had penetrated his side, and a surgeon was called in to dress the wound, which looked as if it might prove serious.

Capturing the bank cashier had taken time, and as soon as Ben had assured himself that Bogg was in safe hands, he hurried off again to where he

had promised to meet the major. But that officer had become alarmed by the various shots fired and was coming back to camp with all possible speed. The two met between the lines, a hurried report was made out, and Major Morris went off to report to his superior.

It can be imagined that Ben retired highly elated. Braxton Bogg was a prisoner, and had stated that almost all the money taken from the bank was hidden in Manila, in the house of a Spaniard named Benedicto Lupez, with whom he had stopped for a couple of weeks. "Won't Larry and Walter and Uncle Job be surprised and delighted when I let them know of what has occurred?" thought the young volunteer.

But now was no time for private affairs, no matter of what importance. The rebel capital was almost in sight, and General MacArthur calculated to capture it before the setting of another sun. Early in the morning the troops began to move, two rapid-firing guns flanking the railroad track, with two guns of the Utah battery on the right and two guns of the Sixth Artillery on the left. Beyond, in the jungle, and over the rice fields, came the volunteers and regular infantry.

Ben's regiment advanced for nearly a mile without encountering serious resistance, and it was thought by many that the rebels had fled straight through Malolos. But about noon the Filipinos were discovered behind a strong intrenchment near one of the rice fields, and an opening fire laid half a dozen of the Americans low. Soon a strong rattle of musketry to the east and west showed that nearly all of the United States troops were being engaged.

"We must force the fighting — we must drive them out!" was the command passed along. "The first battalion will advance along the right edge of the field." And away went the fourth company in skirmish order, Ben leading as before. They had started away from Manila ninety-six strong, now the roll-call held but seventy-seven names.

As they had done many times before, the Filipinos held the intrenchments as long as possible, then fled in wild disorder, burning whatever came ready to hand. But the American troops were close upon their heels, so that the firebrands had but little opportunity to do serious damage.

"Hurrah, there is Malolos!" came the cry, an

hour later, and looking ahead, Ben saw a fair-sized town lying in a hollow. In the centre of the town was a tall flagstaff from which proudly floated the Filipino flag.

"We'll have that rag down pretty soon," came from a number of Montana men, who were forcing the fighting on the right. "All push, boys!" And they did "push" to such an extent that the rebels went flying in all directions. Soon the thick smoke rolled up from Malolos, the Filipino signal that they had evacuated the place. A crowd of Kansas soldiers, led by gallant Colonel Funston, were the first to gain the streets of the town, and the Montana men followed, hauling down the rebel flag and replacing it with their own. Then the regiment to which Ben belonged came in, followed by all of the others, some of them still fighting the Filipino sharpshooters who had secreted themselves in a number of the houses.

"We must clean them all out!" was the order, meaning the sharpshooters, and Ben just turned to cheer on his men when he felt a sudden shock in the breast, followed by a strange sinking sensation. He put his hand up, to withdraw it covered with blood.

"I'm struck!" he gasped to several of the soldiers who came running up. "A sharpshooter fired at me from that window," and as he tried to point with his hand he fell back in a dead faint. It was Casey and Gilbert who carried him to the rear, and they did all they possibly could for him until the surgeon arrived. Then the volunteers ran to the front again, and shortly afterward the last of the Filipinos were utterly routed, and Malolos was ours.

A wild cheering went up when it was realized that the rebel capital was really captured. But there was still work to do, as the palace and other important buildings were in flames, threatening the destruction of the whole place. Wherever the fire was likely to gain headway it was checked. The only inhabitants left were the Chinese, who were busy looting the deserted houses. Their stealings were speedily stopped, and they were compelled to turn in and fight the fire and afterward clean up the streets.

With the taking of Malolos it was felt that the backbone of the rebellion was broken. Aguinaldo had retreated still farther northward, the rebels were scattered in many directions, and their leaders

quarrelled among themselves, some wanting to continue the fight, and others thinking it best to sue for peace. What the outcome was to be, time alone could tell.

As soon as the town became quiet, a hospital was established there in which Ben and a number of others who had been wounded were placed. It was found that the bullet had caused a glancing wound in the young acting captain's side, and that while the injury was not serious yet he must remain quiet for some time to come.

Many came to him while he lay sick, among the number Gilbert and Major Morris. "It's too bad, Ben," said the young Southerner. "But I reckon this campaign is about over."

"He did nobly," said the major. "Not an officer in the whole command could have done better than Acting Captain Russell did. I predict that he'll be a colonel of volunteers, or a brigadier general, before his career closes. I know he is already listed for promotion of some kind."

"Well, I won't object to a regular captaincy," answered Ben, with a faint smile. "And no matter what position I hold, I'll always try to do my best while fighting for Old Glory."

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As soon as he could, Ben wrote to Larry telling him of the capture of Braxton Bogg, who had been transferred to the Manila jail. He also wrote to Walter and to Job Dowling, and my readers can well imagine with what joy all received his communications. Yet they were sorry to learn he had been wounded, and Larry obtained a leave of absence in order to run up to Malolos to visit him.

"And what will you do, Larry?" asked Ben, when he and his brother were on the point of parting. "Will you remain in the navy?"

"For the present, yes, since Walter is going to do so. I'd rather be on a cruiser's deck than anywhere."

"And I would rather be on the battlefield or in camp," replied the young volunteer.

"We are a family of fighters, Ben," concluded Larry. "Hurrah for Old Glory!" And the wounded brother faintly echoed the cheer.

In the meantime the civil authorities took the bank case in hand, with a view to transporting Braxton Bogg back to the United States and recovering every dollar that had been appropriated. But this task was much harder than anticipated, as will be related in another volume, to be entitled "The Campaign of the Jungle; Or, Our Flag in the Philippines," in which we shall again meet not only Ben and Larry, but also Gilbert Pennington and all our other friends.

And now we leave Ben, for the present, and all the rest. No matter what befalls them in the future, may they always be as successful in their undertakings as the young lieutenant was when fighting "UNDER OTIS IN THE PHILIPPINES."

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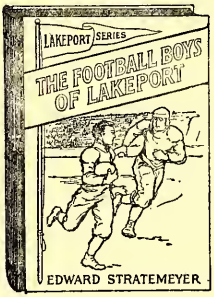

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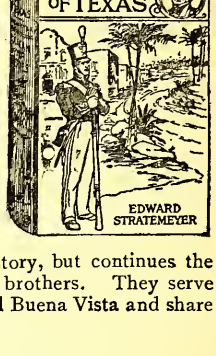

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